THE Freeman

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

NOVEMBER 1957

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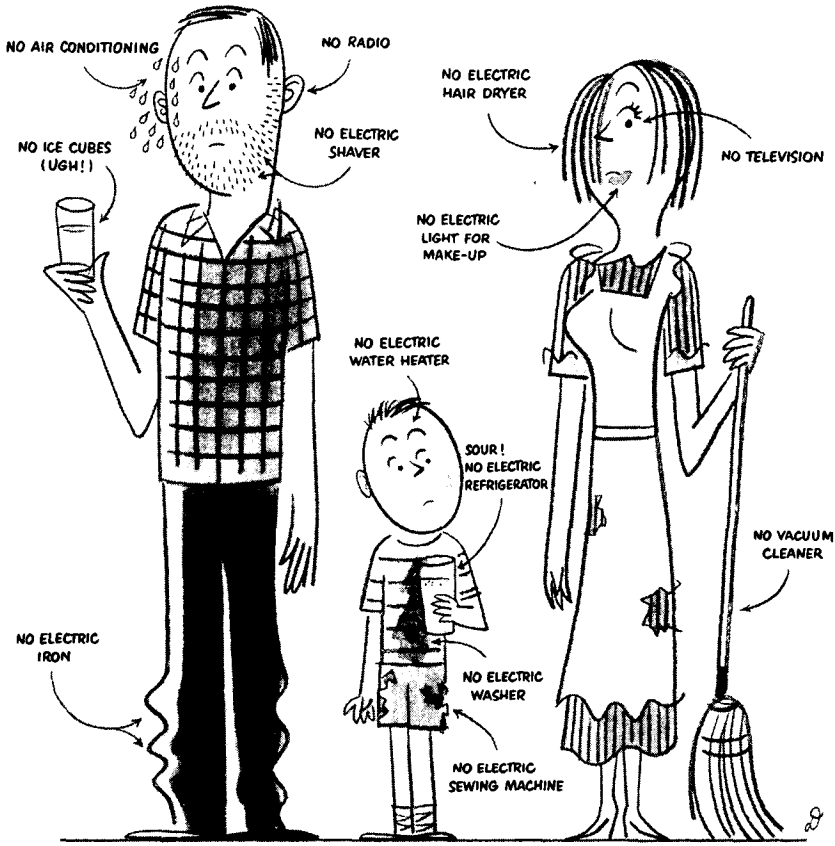

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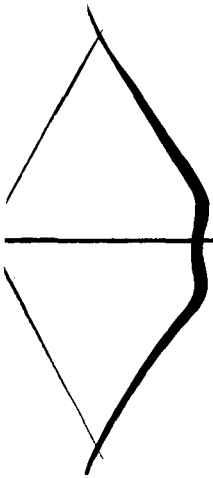

TO SHOOT A MYTH

F. A. HARPER

IT IS difficult enough to shoot a moth on the wing, but it is even more difficult to shoot a myth. In fact, it is all but impossible.

One reason is a matter of simple logic. As Professor H. J. Davenport once expressed it, in commenting on a myth which had been voiced by a student: "How can you, for instance, prove that water babies don't exist? The only sure way would seem to be to find some water babies not existing." And to prove it to those not there at the time one would also need a snapshot of their nonexistent profiles, I suppose.

The same thought was once stated more profoundly by the French philosopher, Henri Bergson:

> I believe that the time given to refutation in philosophy is usually time lost. Of the many attacks directed by many thinkers against each other, what now remains? Nothing, or assuredly very little. That which counts and endures is the modicum of positive truth which each contributes. The true statement, is of itself, able to displace the erroneous idea, and becomes, without our having taken the trouble of refuting anyone, the best of refutations.

The real reason why myths are impossible to shoot is that the forms they can take are infinite in number, and also that they evade one's aim at an infinite speed.

As to the number of forms myths can take, consider the possible answers to 2 plus 2. The only nonmythical answer is 4. But there are infinite mythical answers.

It is similar with any other problem or question, however simple or complex it may be, since each problem has only one correct answer. So if one's aim were perfect and he could shoot a myth with every shot, he could spend his entire lifetime shooting myths released by only one myth factory, without ever demolishing all this factory could produce. For automation is well established in myth

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factories; their production can operate at a fantastic speed, with practically no cost.

As I write this, my wife and I are on the North Atlantic on a Norwegian freighter. Last evening a heavy fog fell on us and our path. Captain Aaby had to leave in the middle of his dinner to oversee operations and was up all night watching things. The bits of moisture in the fog cloud may be compared to myths in their number. They impeded our view as myths becloud the truth. It is possible, of course, to "shoot" a fog particle. But how foolish it would have been for Captain Aaby to do that. Instead, he proceeded on his course the same as ever, guarding only against collision with another ship or an iceberg.

Such is the futility of the enticing sport of shooting at all existing myths. And in addition, they are hard to shoot because they flit here and there at the speed of force without resistance since they are not burdened by the weight and rigid confines of fact. And if you should happen to be so lucky as to hit one squarely, it is likely only to spatter into any number of sub-myths, as if you had hit a gob of mercury with a hammer; and then you will have only spread mythology rather than having demolished it.

Myths grow most freely in the soil of matters beyond the reach of our senses to detect directly. Religion, in coping with faiths about the far beyond, has abounded in myths throughout the existence of man, as evidenced in the wide differences of religious belief that have always existed. And every field of scientific contemplation has been full of myths before more certain scientific truths emerged as each science developed. Social science, being a young science, is still in the mythological realm so far as widespread understanding is concerned. Economic myths are too numerous to shoot – economic fog, we might call it.

The Major Myth

Perhaps the greatest economic myth of all is the one that the government should – and can – do for us what we cannot otherwise do for ourselves. In social science this is the counterpart of a principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; for if you remove the "we" out of any social agglomerate, nothing is left but the shell of a dream. And so if we translate this myth into its real equivalent, it becomes: "We can do for ourselves what we cannot do for ourselves." For in doing things for ourselves, we can do anything for each other, cooperatively and by means of exchange, to any extent we desire and are

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capable of doing under any man-made scheme that we can design.

The myth about government is comparable to what might be called a mythical law of social dynamics: "For *no* governmental action is there an equal and opposite reaction." Or in accounting terms, this myth is comparable to saying that when the government does things, you need not use double entry to balance accounts; that you can enjoy the debit side and forget the credit side; that people can generally get something from nothing; that the government is capable of spontaneous generation of the goodly things of life.

Derivative Myths

In a sense the government seems capable of spontaneous generation —the generation of endless minor myths begotten from this major myth. The list of offspring is seemingly endless. A few items will illustrate.

When the government gives indiscriminate aid to mothers of children born out of wedlock, it seems like a fine, humane thing to do when viewed only on the debit side. Why should the innocent children of irresponsible parents be made to suffer privation? Why not legalize aid to them? The myth of the matter comes into focus only when one looks at the credit side of the matter. You cannot legalize the economic support of illegitimacy without inducing more of the same thing – without stimulating the production of the subsidized product. The fruits of this action have become more and more conspicuous with passing time, as in the instance in Illinois where for the third generation one household is living on the alms of illegitimacy and has abstained from any other form of gainful employment. The process is not quite the same as profitable barnyard reproduction of calves and pigs since the cow and the sow do not resolve their economic welfare by choice in quite this same manner. But otherwise, there is some striking similarity. If the market pays for raising pigs, farmers will raise them. If the government pays for having illegitimate children, that product will be forthcoming, too. So if pity for one illegitimate child leads to one additional case of illegitimacy that would not otherwise have occurred, the merit of the process is certainly debatable; if two or three or more are the result, it is clear that the myth has generated the object of its pity. The myth is found by looking at the credit side. Why can't someone invent a means of myth control?

Even then, having generated that which was the object of our sympathy, other troubles arise as not only unmarried mothers but

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also myths reproduce offspring. Cook County officials found that Elsie M. had illegally obtained $5,-864 relief for ten children sired illegally by five men. So they sent her to jail for six months. The ten children then had to be kept in foster homes—all at an additional expense of $19,948.

As another illustration, take the case of alcohol production and consumption. Year after year has been found in the federal budget, on pages so far apart that their disharmony was not easily detected, two items of interest in relation to one another. On one page is an assessment for all taxpayers to help make up the deficit of the government-operated rum factory on the Virgin Islands; on another page is an assessment on all taxpayers to help cure alcoholism in the District of Columbia. Now whether the neurotic residents of that city of government officials overdid their alcohol consumption with the product from that particular factory, or on vodka, there seems to be a myth or two buried somewhere in this contrast. The two together seem like a make-work tax project of the first order.

Then there is the case of untold millions of dollars of taxpayers' money being spent to increase agricultural production, while billions of what taxpayers have left thereafter are being spent to study the problem of how to dispose of "surplus" farm products, to buy and store those products, and to dump them at far below purchase price. The similarity between this and the alms to illegitimate children, both produced in surplus be-

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cause of reliance on the forthcoming alms, is too close to escape notice. The myth is evidenced on the credit side of the account.

It is traditional with consumers that they would like to pay less for what they buy. By one device or another – price ceilings or whatnot – the government enacts the "protective" legislation. Prices are forced down. Some producers quit producing. Then the myth emerges from its cocoon: Instead of consumers being able to buy the "necessary" product at a "reasonable price," they can't buy it at all because it hasn't been produced. And for a desired product not to be available at any price is a more distressing situation for consumers than to have a price higher than they like to pay.

Tariffs and all sorts of international trade "protections" also offer innumerable illustrations of myths. Some producer wants the domestic market protected from foreign infiltration, and an appropriate mechanism is enacted into law. Perhaps it is for purposes of "national defense," or sympathy for the workers of the local factory in Podunk, or whatnot. Looking at the debit side only, it appears reasonable and a good thing to do. The myth is found on the credit side. If we could see it all worked out, it is as though Farmer A and Farmer B are ready to trade two horses, even for even, but each adds a tariff of 10 per cent to protect himself against the other's dumping his horse on the market; they still trade even, in the end – or perhaps don't trade at all, to the disadvantage of both as separately judged by themselves.

There are myths of this sort without end, for the myth factory is endless in output. The reader can add as many others as he likes from his own experience, illustrating their extent and form. But the point of this whole discussion is not to try to list them all. It is, instead, to suggest that shooting myths, like shooting fog particles on the high sea, may be a sport of sorts but it is no way to get to the port of truth.

Truth to the Rescue

Fog on the high seas is not man made, of course, whereas economic myths enacted into law are man made. And therein lies one difference perhaps worthy of note. Whereas man has no control over the creation of fog, in any detectable form or degree, he has control over the creation of man-made myths. And so birth control of myths is a worthy objective, while shooting them after their uncontrolled production is a rather futile sport. How to control their birth, then, is the question.

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Birth control of myths is better and easier than their displacement with truth. As Dean Myers of Cornell used to say: "There is only one thing worse than ignorance, and that is to know something that isn't true. Unlearning is a difficult and painful process."

In any event, it is truth that serves the processes of both birth control and the displacement of myths; for in the displacement process, myths are like the human mind in abhoring a vacuum. So if you try to displace a myth by removal alone, instead of replacement by a superior belief that will successfully push it aside, a situation is required akin to a vacuum, and this is difficult if not impossible to accomplish.

So to shoot a myth or push it aside, without displacement by first instituting a superior concept, merely means that the suction of the vacuum will promptly replace it with one of the innumerable substitute myths standing by.

Success in dealing with myths, then, would seem to be to work for the positive concept of truth rather than to work against the negative concept of innumerable myths. Then all the myths will fade away and die of neglect and disfavor. And your energies will have been most fruitfully employed that way.

To use a mathematical analogy, you can never attain a positive number merely by cancelling out endless negative numbers. It is the same with myths. It's fun to shoot myths but it's just a sport like shooting clay pigeons – which is fun but not the way to get anything for dinner.

Probably the best way to combat myths is to live strictly by the guide of truth as one sees it, insofar as choice can make the truth accessible. • • •

The Right of Choice

MAN MUST HAVE THE RIGHT OF CHOICE, even to choose wrong, if he shall ever learn to choose right. The child walks as we unwind the swaddling clothes; the building stands in its full beauty as we remove the scaffolding. Let us beware lest we make gods of the scaffolding; lest by making more intricate the wrappings of law, more strong the rods of coercion, man himself remain feeble and imperfect.

JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD

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This article was written about 1948 to describe the ideal of the American Economic System from which there had been, and still is, such grave departure.

HOW'S YOUR *Thinking?*

DOUGLAS J. MURPHEY

IT'S TRUE TODAY, as it always has been, that "as men think, so are they." Saying that we Americans believe in the American Economic System is utterly meaningless unless we know why we believe in it and are able to explain why in understandable language.

You have to start from the realization that it isn't a "system" at all! The word "system" implies a predetermined plan – as if a set of rules had been written out in advance. Of course, that isn't true.

The American Economic System isn't a thing separate and apart from America. It's part and parcel of our way of life, developed from the same roots as our other American institutions. It's a branch on the American tree; to understand the branch, we have to understand the tree and its roots.

Traditionally, the "American way of life" means living under a limited government, a government that is restricted by a constitution – a constitution that says, "Government may do certain things, and government may not do certain other things." Our American form of government was founded and has been preserved and developed by citizens who believed that men, simply by reason of being human beings, possess certain human rights that no government, regardless of power or pure intentions, can justly deny for any reason whatever.

Or, to phrase it another way: We hold, as our Declaration of Independence puts it, that "men are endowed with certain unalienable rights." That word, "unalienable," means that certain rights are ours irrespective of government. Because we didn't get them from government, no government can justly take them away from us.

Mr. Murphey is now associated with one of the large national advertising agencies.

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When a government tries, it becomes tyranny. That's what tyranny means – the denial by government of man's unalienable rights.

But what is an unalienable right? What are the rights that belong to us as human beings?

To Fulfill One's Duty

A man has a duty, whether or not he always fulfills it, to live and act like a human being. But the "duty" is meaningless unless man has freedom to perform that duty. For instance, man is born with an insatiable desire to know truth. But he can't even start to fulfill that desire – that duty – if he isn't free to speak what he believes the truth to be, and to listen to others speak what they believe to be the truth. Therefore, the right to speak truth, or, as we say, free speech, is unalienable. Another example: man has a duty, as a created being, to worship the God who created him; but it would be unintelligent for a Creator to give a man a duty and not freedom to fulfill it. Therefore, freedom of religion is one of the unalienable rights.

A third example – and one of special importance for our purpose right now: Every man has special talents and abilities. He wouldn't have them if he didn't have a duty and a corresponding right to develop and use them. Part and parcel of this right, and inseparable from it, is the right of private property, because a man has no real freedom to fulfill his economic duty if he does not have power to own and use the material things necessary to the development of his talents and abilities. What's more, he didn't get those special talents and abilities, or his right to own property, from the State. He got them from his Creator, a Power above and superior to the State. Therefore, the State can't properly interfere with his right to develop and use them – or with any of his "unalienable rights" except to prevent him from interfering with other men's similar rights. In fact, that is what the Declaration of Independence says a government is for: ". . . to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men."

Thus far, we haven't said a word that any informed American will disagree with – because the opposite of what we've been saying justifies the totalitarian state. Down through the centuries, political scientists and philosophers have never found any other basis upon which human freedom can be logically based. If a man isn't free to use and develop his own talents and abilities, then he's a slave. That's what slavery means – the denial, by force, of man's

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freedom to use his own talents and abilities the way his conscience and opportunities tell him to use them.

A Power Beyond the State

See what we're leading up to? We've been explaining the fundamental logic which we as Americans have inherited from the Judaeo-Christian civilization upon which all Western culture is founded. If the things we've been explaining are not true, then American freedom is an hallucination – a pleasant dream. But because we, as a people, do recognize that the only alternative to Almighty God is the Almighty State (even though we don't think about it as much as we should) we have a firm, rational basis for our American way of life. We have a firm, rational basis for believing in the American Economic System. We have a logical foundation upon which to defend our conviction that every citizen has an unalienable right to choose his own occupation and to develop his own talents and abilities subject to no unjust hindrance and enjoying no special privilege.

All economic systems have lots of things in common. No economic system could work if it were all wrong. But neither can any economic system ever be entirely right if it doesn't have a foundation in truth. That's why our American Economic System, however imperfect it may be and however much it may sometimes be abused, has in it the ability to develop – to become more and more right. It has a sound foundation. It is based on the moral and spiritual dignity of man.

So, keep this in mind: The American Economic System is what it is because it is founded, let us hope solidly, on truth and justice – on the conviction of American citizens that every man has certain unalienable rights which he gets from a Power beyond the State, that are his because he is a human being; and no man, no government, no society, no majority can justly deny him the freedom to exercise those rights.

Inroads by government on man's economic freedom are always "justified" by labels like "Security." But there must be limits even to security if man wants to avoid slavery. After all, absolute security is only another name for a penitentiary.

Down through the ages, men have learned the value of the maxim: "Put not your trust in princes." In this modern world, the "prince" is the State. • • •

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The Importance of A W E

LEONARD E. READ

AN INDIVIDUAL does not adopt authoritarian ways because he knows so little. More likely than not, he behaves in this manner because he is unaware of how little he knows – unaware of the significance that his personal stock of knowledge has in the context of the whole.

But, first, what is meant by an authoritarian? Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, Perón qualify all right. The list, however, goes far beyond the few who have gained renown as political tyrants. And it includes others in addition to Robin Hood, Jesse James, Al Capone, racketeering labor and business leaders, and the like who become governments on their own terms. Further, the list includes more than the supporters of political plunder – those who use the police force to take from some and give to others; those who employ violence to support the claim that their ways of disposing of the fruits of your labor are better than your ways. The list must also include the intellectual authoritarians, those believing that all who do not see eye-to-eye with them are to that extent "off beam" – or fools. The authoritarians are a numerous lot!

Now, it is perfectly obvious that many authoritarians are richer in an encyclopedic type of knowledge than are many libertarians. But, does this necessarily mean that they are wiser? Socrates, reputedly wise, said, "This man thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas I, as I do not know anything, do not think I do either."

It would seem that a person who has gained an awareness of how little he knows could hardly behave as an authoritarian. Such an awareness, however, must be exceedingly elusive; few seem to achieve it. Most of us assume that reality does not go beyond those things and events which fall within the purview of our five senses.

Mr. Read is President of the Foundation for Economic Education.

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We assume that other people are only what they seem to us; that the light we see is the light that is; that the sounds we hear and the odors we smell are the only sounds and odors; that we are the captains of our own souls and the lords of all we survey.

Recognizing One's Limitations

Persons unaware of a creation, a force, an intelligence, a consciousness, far over and beyond selves are susceptible to a belief in their own omniscience. And, those who believe in their own omniscience, logically, cannot envision a perfect society except as others are cast in their little images. It is difficult to imagine anything more responsible for authoritarianism than this type of unawareness.

One young man, a naval chaplain, who is aware of how little he knows explained how this awareness took root in him. As a student at the University of Michigan, visiting the great library for the first time, he became overwhelmed with the fact that there were over two million volumes on its shelves! At that moment he knew that he didn't know much.

One way to gain an appreciation of how little we know is by conscious effort to expose ourselves to ideas, things, experiences lying outside our own small orbits. For, if we aren't daily standing more and more in awe of everything within and without our beings, we can count on it, we simply aren't growing in wisdom. To illustrate how exposure to the wholly new can create an awareness of how little we know, visualize a sheet of black, infinite in its dimensions. Now, assume that in childhood one had carved out an amount of light – understanding – as symbolized by the small circle atop this article. But, in the years since, he has enlarged his understanding as symbolized by the larger circle. In the latter case, note the much greater amount of darkness to which he has exposed himself. The more one knows, the more awareness he should have of the unknown.

One Billion Corpuscles

There are all sorts of helpful exercises – such as an occasional rehearsal of the startling facts of life – that can induce an awareness of how little one knows. For example, while reading the above three paragraphs, there will have been created within the reader nearly one billion new red blood corpuscles. Astounding as this is, each of these billion corpuscles is a mystery in itself. For, "every substance is a system of molecules in motion and every molecule is a system of oscillating atoms and

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every atom is . . . ." Well, what is an atom?

One noted chemist in trying to make simple an answer to this question began by asserting that there were more atoms in his hand than there were grains of sand on all the beaches of the earth. To dramatize the nature of an atom he asked his listeners to take an Alice-in-Wonderland growing pill, one that would shoot them through the roof, past the clouds, through the stratosphere, past the moon, past the sun and some of the planets, until each person was enlarged by a factor of a trillion. Thus magnified, an atom of calcium from the bone of one's thumb would be in manageable proportions for inspection.

Enlarged by this factor of a trillion, the atom of calcium becomes a ball about one hundred yards in diameter. Inside there will be twenty luminous spheres about the size of basketballs moving in great circles like planets around the sun. These, says the scientist, are the electrons, the particles of negative electricity which make up the outer part of the atom. Some of them occasionally swing out and circle around neighboring atoms like folks doing a square dance, and this motion provides the forces which tie the atoms together in a chemical structure.

If, continues the scientist, you try to find what the "sun" is, about which these planetary electrons are circling, you have to look at the center of this calcium atom; and there you see a tiny whirling point of light, smaller than the head of a pin (after being multiplied 1,000,000,000,000 times). This is the atomic nucleus which contains practically all the mass of the atom, as well as its atomic energy.

If you ask the scientist what else is in the atom, his reply is *"Nothing."* Since we are made of atoms, we, too, are nothing much but empty space. Apply an imaginary press to a human being and squeeze out all of the space, and there would remain a speck, smaller than a particle of dust that could be seen on a sheet of white paper!

Extending the Horizon

What is the lesson to be learned from such phenomena? Increase knowledge and understanding as much as one will, and the unknown, instead of being domesticated by man's mind, looms ever vaster and more improbable. We are not justified in believing that what we see with our eyes and what we hear with our ears constitute the whole of reality. Greater understanding is but a means to an awareness of the Infinite. No

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one of us gets more than a casual glance of all creation, and each of us experiences a different view.

Go a step further with our scientist. Consider the hydrogen nuclei in your own person. Now, assume that you know the secret of converting the energy of these nuclei into controlled electrical energy. You alone could supply power enough to operate all the factories and all the lights for the entire United States for many weeks. Or, suppose that you know how to fuse the hydrogen in your body. You could explode with a force one hundred times greater than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima!

"Marvelous Are Thy Works"

Just these smatterings of information leave me with a feeling of utter awe, humility. I can now repeat with meaning, "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works." It is the next sentence, however, that carries the greatest knowledge of all: *"And that my soul knoweth right well."* Here is the soul cleansed of know-it-allness, the precondition to fulfillment.

When the soul knows this about the self, it must, to be logical, know this about others. It must know that in each person there is an enormous potentiality, an unimaginable creativity, working to manifest itself, evolving, emerging. What human being, with any such awareness, could possibly suggest that his relatively ignorant little will should be imposed on others, substituted for this Creative Force? What person, thus humble, would attempt forcibly to direct or control what another shall invent, discover, create, where and at what he shall work, what the hours of his labor shall be, what wage he shall receive, what and with whom he shall exchange, or what thoughts he shall entertain?

Assuming this awareness of how little one knows, how could one behave as an authoritarian, play the role of God? On the contrary, isn't it such an awareness that can aid one in overcoming man's original sin, in thwarting his continuous temptation, namely, the substitution of his will for that of his Creator?

Authoritarian attitudes and behaviors, however, are not to be done away with merely to relieve the pain of their affliction on others. Their destructive influence on the self which exercises them must be weighed.

Plato suggested that the real authoritarian is the real slave; that he is obliged to practice adulation, servility, and flattery. His desires are impossible of satisfaction and thus he is truly poor.

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He grows worse from having power; for power necessarily promotes jealousy, faithlessness, injustice, unfriendliness, and impiety. Not only is he miserable himself, but he also makes others equally as miserable. The authoritarian attempts to be the master of others when, obviously, he is not even master of himself. Plato likens the authoritarian to the man who passes his life, not in the building of his inner self, but in fighting and combating other men. Need we do more than look about us to confirm the rightness of Plato's observations?

Stop Meddling: Be Free

Change is a law of all living things. That which is not growing is atrophying; that which is not progressing is retrogressing; that which is not emerging is regressing. *The authoritarian act, or even thought, is time off from growth, progress, emergence.* One cannot be attentive to the inner self while exerting coercion on others. The person who has me on my back holding me down is as permanently fastened on top of me as I am under him. To me, at least, this explains why Lord Acton was right when he said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

For any person to become aware of how little he knows – not a very difficult attainment – is a sure way to reduce the number of authoritarians by one. Who knows? The awareness might even catch on. And, if it did? Millions of us would foresake society's most corrosive pastime – meddling in the affairs of others – meddling not only through the political apparatus, but personally. Millions of us could then concentrate on the wholly rewarding venture of freeing ourselves from our own fears, our own superstitions, our own imperfections, our own ignorance. The individual human spirit, neglected while we play the futile and authoritarian game of imposing our wills on others, cries out for its freedom. • • •

The Way To Begin

NO COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS or elections or laws are needed for a person to begin the practice of freedom. One need merely resolve not to impose his will — legally or illegally — upon his peaceful fellow men in their religions, their economic theories, their attitudes, their morals, their mores, or whatever. And then start to practice it.

DEAN RUSSELL, *My Freedom Depends on Yours*

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Social Discipline

Alchemists (Woodcut, 1531)

Herrell DeGraff

For ages man's understanding of nature was based on superstition and fantasy. Through all this time he was, in consequence, a slave to his environment – and almost starved to death. Famine was a definite factor even in the death rate of Europe up to 150 years ago.

More recently, the relative understanding we call *science* has been finding natural truths which have existed through all time and which enable man to make fuller use of the wealth of opportunity all around him.

We have learned that we live in an orderly universe of natural physical law in which nothing is haphazard.

Concerning another kind of natural law – let's distinguish it as natural moral law – we have learned much less. In philosophic, moral, social, and economic relationships, cause and consequence are neither understood nor accepted as they are in connection with natural physical law. In these areas of human affairs we still are more or less alchemists.

Yet natural law, whatever *is* natural law, is Eternal Truth. This is as true of natural moral law as it is of the more commonly recognized and accepted natural physical law.

Natural moral law is, quite certainly, difficult to discover, and more difficult to accept, to honor, and to live by. But any blindness to the fact that it is Eternal Truth is especially serious – because of our dependence upon natural moral law for the proper ordering of society.

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I submit that the purest distillation of what *is* natural moral law is expressed in the moral codes of behavior that have come down the ages to us in the form of the Golden Rule and the Decalogue. These are not exclusive Christian property. The concepts are included in the other great religions as well. And, in fact, they are accepted as a code of behavior by many who embrace no organized religion. Thus they may now be regarded either in a secular sense as purely a distillation of human experience or in the Divine sense of revealed law.

In either case they are an *individual* code pointed directly at the individual, establishing the basis on which each individual can be an effective, generative unit of society.

Morally Guided Self-Interest

The concept of man distilled out of Judaic-Christian philosophy – and many have found the same through strictly secular analysis – is that each person *is a self-acting, morally responsible individual, cooperating in society through his morally guided self-interest.*

The capacity of the human individual to accept on this basis his place among his fellow men distinguishes him from the lesser creatures of the earth – lesser creatures controlled by a self-interest that does not contain the modifiers set forth in this philosophy.

I submit that this philosophy is natural law; that each part of it is essential to the total concept; and that, as natural law, it cannot be abrogated with impunity.

Henry Grady Weaver, in *The Mainspring of Human Progress*, explains that in the earlier experience of man there were held to be many pagan gods who controlled, by whim and fancy, everything that related both to man's environment and to his aspirations.

Then Abraham arrived upon the scene and denied the existence of such gods. He insisted that there is only one God – the God of all things, who creates and judges, but who does not control. He taught that God is Rightness, Reality, and Truth; that man is free and self-controlling, and responsible for his own acts; that each person may do good or evil as he chooses, but that any wrong act will result in punishment to the evildoer.

Abraham's concept laid the foundation for scientific progress – and for social and economic progress as well. So long as the concept prevailed that the universe and all human affairs were controlled by the whims and fancies of prankish gods – and one

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could lump with this the concept of predestination – there was no point in trying to improve anything through individual effort. "Progress did not come," says Weaver, "until men began to realize that everything works according to plan – the essence of which is truth and rightness. Every engineer, every scientist, every farmer, every mechanic knows that nothing will work, that no act will succeed, unless it is in harmony with rightness – the true nature of things as they are."

Goethe expressed the same idea in these words:

> Nature understands no jesting;
> She is always true, always serious, always severe;
> She is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of man.
> The man incapable of appreciating her she despises
> And only to the apt, the pure, and the true
> Does she resign herself and reveal her secrets.

These concepts, I submit, apply alike to science and to morals.

Natural Laws Prevail

When one pounds his thumb instead of a tack, natural law decrees that he will suffer physical pain. When one steals from another, his violated sense of moral right decrees likewise that he shall suffer. Ignorance of the effect of the hammer (physical law) or of stealing (moral law) will not change the result in either case. One may be ignorant or contemptuous of the moral law, but he will attain little of his God-given potential as a moral, self-directing, self-responsible individual as long as either the condition of ignorance or the attitude of contemptuousness prevails.

And this applies to more than individuals.

Suppose it is part of the culture pattern of a whole society that they look with favor upon stealing. This may stem from either ignorance or contempt of moral law. What part of the aggregate potential of all the members of such a society – and thus of the society as such – will be realized? What ventures they might otherwise undertake, what achievements they might otherwise reach, will be discouraged and prevented as long as stealing is institutionalized.

Just as neither the individual nor society can repeal the natural physical law of gravity, so neither the individual nor society can repeal natural moral laws.

Thus, to paraphrase Dr. Harper,[1] we must conclude that natu-

[1] Harper, F. A. *Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery.* Irvington-on-Hudson, N. Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949.

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ral physical laws and natural moral laws are parts of one inseparable body of Truth. Moral considerations are the guide to human betterment, through self-application – and thus self-development – by individuals. It follows that social and economic policies which violate moral law retard human betterment – and even cause degeneration from previous achievement.

The Christian concept of man, ascendent from the early sixteenth through most of the eighteenth centuries, produced the idea of natural rights. An inalienable right, founded in Christianity, is the individual's right to life. If this is a natural right, it has always existed in Truth. It has not always existed in fact – as when "the power of life and death" was held by an absolutist under such a concept as "the divine right of kings." In the discard of such a concept we have drawn closer to moral Truth.

There are "lesser" rights under moral law that many persons still are prone to deny. The socialist, for example, says there is no "proof" of inherent rights claimed for the individual by the believer in individualism. The socialist claims the rights for society – for the "social unity" – for government.

But where, one must ask, did society – the government – get any rights that it in turn may dispense? If the answer is that society took them from individuals (and from where else could they be taken?) then they were inherent in the individual until society expropriated them. This is the case for the concept of individual rights as held by the individualist.

Life and Property

If the individual has an inalienable right to life, it follows that he has the right to sustain that life. And then it follows that he has the right to use his capacities to produce the wherewithal to sustain life – and the right to use what he produces. Any denial in this chain is a denial of the inalienable right to life.

Thus a man has a right to the fruits of his labor, to his property – private property, which certainly no one else has a moral right to take from him without his consent.

Most people concede this and would not steal because their moral precepts hold them above stealing.

Peter may have and Paul may want. But Paul is a moral fellow. He is guided by the Decalogue, including the two "economic" commandments: Thou shalt not covet; and, Thou shalt not steal.

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Personal conduct in this area stands at a generally high state of morality. But Robin Hood "economics" is nevertheless rampant. Take from "the rich" and give to "the poor." Take from him who has more and give to him who has less. All around us we see an amazing degree to which this is not only condoned but aggressively promoted, so long as the taking is done by "the government" – which is to say by *the majority*. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." This is a key concept from the *Communist Manifesto* – the very essence of Robin Hood economics – that has become widely accepted and promoted by vast numbers of people who would be shocked and indignant if anyone were to call them socialists. And yet it is the very heart of socialist philosophy. Here is where personal morality and group morality have become widely divergent in our own country, in our own time.

Is Robin Hood economics, by the majority instead of by one, any less predatory – any less stealing? Is it any more moral?

Paul, who wants, asks his government to provide for him collectively with his fellow-Pauls. "Government" counts the votes involved, and acquiesces. Then government appropriates. But government has nothing to give without first taking from someone. Legislation is drawn that directs Peter to pay.

Is Paul any more moral – is it any less stealing – to go through government to get Peter's property than to take it from him personally?

Socialism says that predatory Robin Hood economics *is* moral. This is gratifying indeed to Paul. But by what right or authority, other than the authority of collective power? By what twist does the social group, the entity that under socialism is elevated above the individual, morally become predatory upon the individual and expropriate from him against his will?

The Decalogue, whether regarded as of Divine origin or taken merely as a distillation from man's accumulated experience, says: Thou shalt not covet, Thou shalt not steal. All the thousands of years since Abraham and Moses have neither modified nor improved the code.

To be sure, the Decalogue sets a code of individual behavior. But are not majorities composed of individuals? Does a mob change either the code or its application? Or do they merely break it? And can the mob break it with impunity, any more than can an individual?

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Does the commandment say it is all right for a stronger Peter to take away from a weaker Paul, just so long as the Pauls operate in a numerically larger gang? If so, then it is might that makes right—and morals are determined by might.

Dr. Herman Finer of the University of Chicago wrote a book called *Road to Reaction,* designed to refute Hayek's book, *Road to Serfdom.* Finer wrote, "In a democracy right is what the majority makes it to be."

If this is true, then the majority can say there is no gravity. The majority can say black is white. Absurd? Not according to Finer. If what he says is wisdom instead of foolishness, then by one sentence on paper, Caesar has superseded God. If he has found Truth, then the mob can at all times be guided only by expediency—and there are no controlling moral values in man's accumulated experience. If what he says is true, then there is no Eternal Moral Truth but only the thrill of the moment. This is the teaching of socialism, but is it a proper reading of natural moral law?

The essence of social discipline, as I understand it, is not different from the standard of behavior incumbent on the individual. Part of such a concept is, certainly, that private property should not be violated through arbitrary social covetousness. Predatory raids on private property are a violation of natural moral law, which cannot be broken without penalty to the social group any more than it can be broken by the individual without penalty to the individual.

This is the moral case for social discipline, according to the Christian precepts upon which this nation was founded. No other case or defense should be necessary.

Punitive Taxation

Of course, from a "practical" viewpoint, government *can* take and redistribute. Government can divide. But government cannot multiply. And it is only through multiplication of production that there is anything to divide.

Discriminatory expropriation—progressive taxation—is a specially disastrous form of robbing Peter, for discriminatory taxation is punitive. And who will carry forward the desired, but punished, function of production with fullest zest and maximum contribution?

Socialism is accepted by many as the ultimate of social justice and moral fairness. Yet it is inevitably, openly, and frankly predatory. Is this just, fair, and moral? Is this social discipline?

Individualism is considered by

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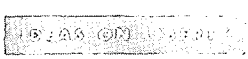
many as immoral, selfish, the licensing of greed, and the implementing of all the evil in man. Yet, in human history, it has led to more fully developed and more self-responsible individuals; to higher material attainments more widely shared; to greater compassion for and generosity to fellow men – with one's own goods not with means confiscated from someone else – than has any other ordering of human society. Can individualism be condemned as evil when it is practiced by self-acting, morally responsible persons? And if personal morality in human affairs is not all that might be desired, can the level be raised if even the choice of being moral or not moral is taken away through socialism?

Two points here are noteworthy. First, to be moral, there must be the alternative of not being moral. Morality is active, not passive. Its practice requires a choice. And second, no one can be an involuntary good Samaritan, for that is a contradiction of terms.

Can society deliver a utopia – a "no-place," in the original Greek – through confiscation of the fruits of its more productive members? Or, does such confiscation and redistribution merely sow the seed for the discouragement of the able and for the moral degeneration of those who receive the plunder? In what way may social discipline properly be conceived to differ from the self-discipline that is incumbent upon us as moral individuals? • • •



Juvenile Delinquency

NOR SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED that there is some juvenile delinquency where adult delinquency is so rampant, and where the absence of any basic moral code among adults precludes even the possibility of their effectively teaching a moral code that will prevent delinquency in the young. If, as adults, we practice collective thievery through the Welfare State, and advocate it as right and good, how can we question the logic of the youths who likewise form gangs and rob the candy store? If demonstration is the best teacher, we adults must start with the practice of morality ourselves, rather than hiring some presumed specialist to study the causes of similar conduct among the youngsters; their conduct is the symptom, not the disease.

F. A. HARPER, *Morals and the Welfare State*

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Why Humans Must Be Free

V. Orval Watts

Man makes progress – he develops his human qualities – as he exercises his powers of choice and recognizes responsibility for his own acts. This is why government cannot promote human progress except as it establishes freedom, which is the political condition for voluntary action.

For humans are not only purposive beings, as all living creatures are. They are also self-controlling or self-directing. That is, they choose their purposes and their methods for pursuing their purposes. This means that they gain human quality only as they exercise this power of choice and learn to use it skillfully – that is, *wisely*.

Other creatures pursue purposes largely dictated by built-in reflexes and instincts. By instinct a bird seeks out certain kinds of food, builds its nest, preens its feathers, flies north in the spring and south in the fall. By instinct a hen scratches for food, and by instinct a lion stalks its prey.

But man acts according to ideas which he himself fashions and selects in much the same way that he makes his clothing and selects his food.

True, he has certain reflexes and a few vague instincts. These take care of some of his more basic needs, such as his need for air – if he permits them to do so. But he may, if he chooses, recondition his own reflexes and act completely contrary to his instincts. Thus expert swimmers and divers learn new breathing habits, and Hindu yogis learn to control even their heart beats.

Man gets his controlling ideas by using the evidence brought him by his senses. But he himself

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determines what senses he will use, how, when, and where he uses them, and what ideas he forms concerning the sensations they bring him. He may close his eyes and refuse to see what is before him, or he may reject what he sees as useless or unreal.

And as he sifts and reworks the data supplied him by his senses, he forms patterns of ideas, values, and purposes which govern his actions.

Man Is Responsible

Because of this power of self-control, man is not only *accountable* for his acts, but he is *responsible* for them. Like every other creature, he is accountable in that he must suffer the penalties for error as he enjoys the rewards for being wise and efficient. But he is also responsible for his acts, in a way that other creatures are not, in the sense of being "answerable as the primary cause, motive, or agent." (*Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*) For each individual human being can act or refuse to act as he wills, and whether he acts wisely or foolishly depends on ideas which only he individually can control.

It is true that a man may try to evade his responsibility by claiming that others compel him to act as he does. But as long as a person retains his human faculties, he remains self-controlling. When a bank teller obeys the command of an armed bandit and surrenders the bank's funds, we may excuse him on the ground that his employers and the bank's depositors do not expect him to risk his life by refusing. But he is nevertheless responsible for his act in that he chooses to make the surrender. We recognize this fact when we condemn a similar surrender by a guard who has pledged himself to resist such coercion.

Would we hold blameless the father who killed his own child at the command of an armed thug? Then neither can we hold irresponsible any person who yields to coercion, even though we agree that discretion is sometimes better than valor.

Not the Same Purpose

We should realize, however, that when a person yields to a threat of violence, his self-determined purpose is to avoid the violence rather than to accomplish the purpose of his assailant. If he wanted to do what his would-be masters propose, no violence or threat of injury would be necessary. When violence, or force, is necessary to make men act, it is because the victims of it have purposes contrary to the purposes of the aggressors.

No external force can change

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these purposes or the ideas from which they spring. They can be changed only by the free will of the person who is to act. If the victim of violence chooses to act as his assailant directs, he does so, not because he has adopted his assailant's purpose, but in order to accomplish the quite different purpose of avoiding the threatened injury.

Force Can't Control Purpose

It is this inescapable conflict of purposes that makes slavery, the "planned society," and the "welfare state" destructive of all human values and character. The purpose of the masters or government officials may be to get certain work done or to improve the understanding and character of their subjects. But increasingly as time passes, the subjects of the coercion seek to escape from the threat of violence.

Fear of a master's lash or of a communist firing squad, for example, may cause men for a time to go through certain dictated motions, but these motions do not make efficient farmers. Instead, the private purposes of those who suffer from the coercion cause increasing inefficiency in pursuing the masters' purposes because these private purposes of the victims have to do with escape, resistance, or retaliation. These private purposes are the ones which enlist the victims' will and ingenuity. They are the only ones which the victims can pursue with energy or skill.

The final result depends on the victims' ideas about how they may best escape the threatened violence. They may decide on open flight or resistance, or they may choose secret sabotage and slowdowns. If they decide that all flight or resistance is hopeless, they are likely to feel increasing fatigue and depression ("laziness") when at work, with the gradual atrophy of will and initiative, along with increasing desires for wasteful dissipation, or vice, that characterize people long subject to enslavement and tyranny.

To an account of the recent strike of trolley-car workers in Lodz, Poland, the Warsaw correspondent of *Newsweek* adds:

"The complaints of Lodz are echoed everywhere, except among the peasants who have benefited from Gomulka's de-collectivization policy. In the cities, low living standards, desperate consumer-goods shortages, and hopelessness over the future all combine to throttle initiative. Walkouts and work stoppages are on the increase. Thievery and drunkenness are rampant. Absenteeism runs as high as 30 per cent. Apathy char-

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acterizes the Polish worker. As a leading intellectual put it: 'Grayness has entered our spirit.'" (August 26, 1957, pp. 49-50)

If a man is to become an efficient farmer, he must want to farm, and he must recognize his responsibility for doing the things necessary to produce the crops. The slave can never become an efficient farmer if his real purpose is to avoid the lash rather than to raise fine crops, for it is to his private purpose that his thoughts and ingenuity turn even when he is unaware of the fact.

Similarly, when any person or group tries to compel others to be charitable, industrious, thrifty, or kind, the victims of the coercion lose their sense of personal responsibility for acquiring these virtues. Deprived of opportunity to use and develop their human qualities of self-direction, they revert toward the animal level. At this lower level, they become more like domesticated cattle, lacking ingenuity, enterprise, and reasoning ability. Or, they may become as intractable as the tiger, the zebra, or the polar bear.

The Limits of Government's Power

Now government is an agency for compulsion. Men organize it and use it only to apply force and threat of force against their fellows. As a means for applying force, it can imprison or execute wrongdoers, recover stolen property, punish fraud, and repel invaders. In short, it can do to, or for, humans whatever force and violence can do: hurt them, restrain them, destroy them, or frighten them.

As it uses its force and violence to combat thieving, banditry, gangsterism, rioting, and warlike invasion, government can free farmers, mechanics, traders, and other producers from interference. The more effectively it thus prevents such interference, the greater is the output of goods and the greater are the revenues government can get for its own uses.

It is this service to producers that explains whatever "efficiency" and "success" in production we observe in the relatively more socialistic countries like Soviet Russia and Yugoslavia. The price (in terms of meddling and spoliation) which the rulers charge producers for their services in these "enslaved" nations is exorbitant but not quite prohibitive.

Beyond this protective service to producers, government coercion not only has no usefulness, but it actually works to limit and reduce government's power. For as it bullies producers in its effort to direct their labor and to get more production out of them, it restricts their output and so reduces

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the flow of goods from which the government gets its own coercive machinery and power.

Such government bullying of producers has this effect because no external force can form a man's ideas or determine his purposes. No force or threat of violence, legal or illegal, can inspire the desire to do good or the will to do evil. It cannot make men compassionate, thrifty, foresighted, or industrious. It cannot awaken their sense of responsibility. It cannot instill good purpose or create good character; men have endured torture, even unto death, rather than do what they believed to be evil.

In short, force, violence, and intimidation cannot make bad men good or good men better. For no man is merely clay to be molded by his fellows, whether they be government officials, teachers, employers, or neighbors. Nor is he a machine for going through certain prescribed motions at the command of any master or government.

Instead, man fulfills his Creator's purpose only as he develops the power to know and choose good, and reject evil. The compulsions of the Welfare State can no more develop this power in its subjects than riding men about in police wagons can make them into long-distance runners or star football players.

Every human being's progress depends on the amount of effort that he himself exerts in pursuit of good purposes.

Among the essential conditions for this effort are the opportunities, the risks, and even the obstacles, of freedom. • • •

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Paved With Intentions

CHILE is another example of the slow transformation of the welfare state into tyranny and dictatorship. When the government has the power of dipping into public funds for distribution to various groups under the welfare state theory of government, the pressure put upon it by the people cannot be resisted. Inevitably, it spends more than its income and not only taxes the people to the point of strangling business but creates enormous deficits in addition. Inflation then produces the chaos which makes necessary the suspension of free government and the institution of dictatorship.

HOWARD E. KERSHNER, *It's Up To You*
A release from Christian Freedom Foundation, Inc.

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More Frenchme:

ALGERIA SETTLERS SOUGHT BY FRANCE

A news dispatch of August 8, 1957, from Algeria, reports that "the French government is preparing a series of loan programs to encourage the people of France to invest or settle in Algeria.

"The goal is not only to bring more Frenchmen to Algeria but also to create new jobs for unemployed Moslems and raise the living standards of the Moslem population.

"Loans ranging from $8,700 to $10,500 are being offered to young soldiers willing to remain in Algeria after their tour of duty...the ex-soldier is not required to provide any capital himself, but can borrow as much as 100 per cent of the funds needed to start a modest venture [at an] interest rate of 1½ per cent on loans for farm lands and equipment, 2 per cent on industrial loans, and 3½ per cent for commercial enterprises."

A second dispatch of that same date reports that "twelve farm workers were killed and four wounded today in West Algeria when a rebel mine destroyed their truck. The attack brought to twenty-seven the number of persons killed in the Oran area in the last twenty-four hours."

(World Photos)

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to Algeria?

The French government's recent action recorded on opposite page brings to mind Frederic Bastiat's observations concerning an earlier French effort to colonize Africa. In 1850 he set down the following arguments, which are worth reconsidering.

GO TO THE ASSEMBLY and listen to the debates on Algeria. You will hear the orators declaiming many fine things about the power and glory of France, about the brilliant future of our gigantic colony in Africa, and about the advantages of sending our surplus population abroad. These magnificent orations always conclude somewhat as follows: "We must vote the necessary 50 millions to construct ports and roads in Algeria, to build houses and to encourage agriculture, and to send emigrants from France to Algeria. These measures will aid the French workingman, encourage native African labor, and stimulate the commerce of Marseilles. It would be profitable in every way."

And, of course, that is true – if you look only at where the money goes and not where it comes from; if you look only at the improvements caused by the spending of tax money, and ignore the improvements that could not be made by the taxpayers because their money was taken from them.

True enough, one can see the new house that is built in Algeria with tax money. One can also see the new harbor in Barbary and the increased commercial activity in Marseilles. And the number of French workers going to jobs in Algeria can actually be counted. But there is another side to the picture *that is not seen.*

The 50 millions gathered by the State cannot be spent by the taxpayers. Thus an accurate accounting demands that the benefits claimed by the State should be balanced by the harm done to the citizens. The taxpayers would have used their money to repair their fences, fertilize their fields, buy needed tools, improve their homes, improve their diets, purchase more clothing, educate their children better, contribute more to charity, and so on. Those are the things that *cannot be seen* because the tax money sent to Algeria prevented their coming into existence.

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True enough, there are more jobs in Africa because of the spending of the 50 millions. But *what is not seen* is that the absence of the 50 millions from France caused at least an equal loss of work for the local gardeners, carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, and others. In addition to this decrease in domestic labor, the taxpayers were also deprived of the pleasure that would have accrued to them from spending their own money as they wished. When we look at Algeria and the things that can easily be seen, we should also remember these things that *cannot be seen.*

Consider This!

Much is expected from the future prosperity of Algeria. Let us hope for the best. But when it is pointed out to me that each colonist sent to Algeria means an improvement in the conditions of the workers left in France, I must ask how that can possibly be true. The Minister of War informs us that it costs the State 8,000 francs for each person transported to Algeria. Now it is certain that these poor individuals could live very well in France on a capital of 4,000 francs. How is it an improvement to the French people to deprive them of the services of one man and the means of subsistence for two men?

Generally speaking, it is not a good idea to use tax funds to establish enterprises. Here is why: Justice always suffers in some degree. The taxpayer who has labored to earn his hundred sous is at least disappointed that the tax collector takes them from him to give to another. The State must offer good reasons for this. But, actually, the State gives a poor excuse when it says, "With these hundred sous, we shall employ workmen." The taxpayer can truthfully reply, "With the hundred sous, I would employ them myself." This claimed encouragement of labor is a delusion. Whatever the State does in this direction by public spending, the private spending of the money would also have done. Therefore, the interest of "labor" is not a valid issue in the case.

Now it is an entirely different matter when the State says to the taxpayer, "'We take your hundred sous to pay the policeman who saves you the trouble of providing for your own personal safety; to pave the streets that you use every day; to pay the judge who helps to protect your property and your liberty; to maintain the soldier who protects our frontiers." My guess is that the taxpayer will pay for all that without hesitation.

But it is another thing entirely when the State says to him, "We take these hundred sous so that

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we may give you a bonus if you cultivate your fields well; or to teach your son something that you have no wish that he should learn; or to build a cottage in Algeria – in which case, we must tax you another hundred sous every year to support the worker who lives in it, and another hundred to maintain the soldier to protect the worker, and another hundred to pay the general to watch the soldier," and so on. In this case, I think I hear the poor taxpayer exclaiming, "This government seems to be a system of legalized robbery!"

A Dislocated Population

Since these governmental expenditures merely change labor without increasing it, another serious objection can be raised against them: "When workers are arbitrarily shifted about, the natural distribution of population in the nation is disturbed. If the 50 millions are left in the possession of the taxpayers, labor would be encouraged throughout all the hamlets and towns of France. Since the taxpayers are everywhere, they spend their money among all kinds of workers and industries. But when the State collects the 50 millions and spends it in one place, it attracts to that place much labor. This increases the number of homeless workers. It creates a floating population that is out of place. I also suspect that this displaced population may become dangerous when the fund is used up.

This feverish activity in Algeria attracts the attention of all. The resulting construction and new jobs can be seen by anyone who looks. The people applaud the beauty and simplicity of the government's plan, and expect more and more. But they fail to realize that there is a reverse side to the picture, a side that is not good, *a side that they do not see.* • • •

Translated and condensed by Dean Russell from *Oeuvres Choisies de Frederic Bastiat*, Volume 2, pp. 379-383. Paris: Guillaumin, 1863.

Individual Effort

THE NATURAL EFFORT of every individual to better his own condition is so powerful that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often incumbers its operations.

ADAM SMITH

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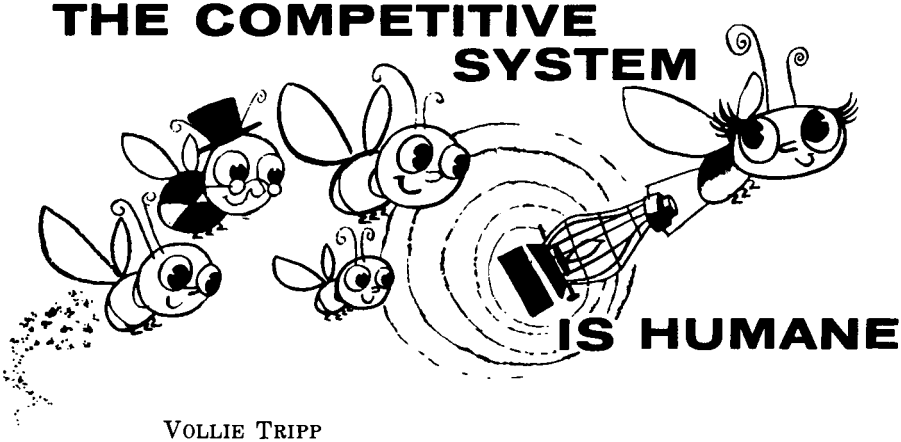
THE COMPETITIVE SYSTEM IS HUMANE



VOLLIE TRIPP

COMPETITION is said to be the "life of trade." It is more. It is life itself.

The collectivist fears competition, seeks to hinder, control, or do away with it altogether because he is afraid of life. He is timid, meek, shy, lacking faith in himself to meet the problems every single creature has had to face from the very beginning.

Competition is as basic as gravitation, or procreation. We can no more escape it than we can escape death, or the consequence of folly. Let's see how it operates in the world of living things all about us.

The trees above me as I write this are competing with each other for root space in the ground, and for sunlight above their heads. The sparrows are competing with the finches, with each other, not to mention the hawks and owls. Even the fireflys are competing for attention at night, the fly with the brightest light attracting, ergo, the largest number of eligible males from which to choose a mate.

Competition among the lesser creatures in the air, earth, and sea is apt to be a pretty grim affair, with death the penalty of failure. And yet, were it not for the constant struggle to adapt to conditions, outwit myriad enemies, and reach up into the light, it is doubtful if any living organism would ever have broken out of its soft comfortable cocoon. Certain it is we should have no magnificent redwoods, no gorgeous butterflies, not one of the proud, sleek ani-

Mr. Tripp, retired from the building business, now devotes full time to travel, writing, and promotion of free enterprise.

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mals, or graceful birds, that make our world so beautiful and interesting.

Those who find fault with competition find fault with the plans of the Creator himself. It would be just as foolish, and as futile, to complain about the organization of the heavenly bodies, and propose a more efficient orbit for their travels through the sky.

The socialist, the communist, the statist, the "liberal," often attack competition on the grounds that it is cruel and blind, shoving aside or destroying the weak and inept, exalting the strong and clever. On the biological level, this may be true. Perhaps a thousand daisy seeds fall to the ground for every one that is able to blossom. Perhaps a million oyster eggs must be laid for every full-grown oyster. But in the realm of human affairs, competition – in the shape of the market economy – has resulted in social conditions where the weak and incompetent, far from perishing, are tenderly cared for, permitted to multiply their kind, and achieve their own measure of happiness and success. For the free market economy, in addition to making it possible for more people to live by a higher standard, also produces a surplus which flows into philanthropy.

No other society, no other economic plan has ever created enough wealth to make this possible, even had it so desired. In other times and ages the weak, the sick, the old, infirm, insane, were left to die, or even put to death. The economy simply could not afford to carry along the burden of its nonproducing members.

Let's pursue the idea a bit further. Competition, the ceaseless effort to make things better, in the hope of attracting more customers, making more money, has sparked technical progress and the infinitely complex system of exchanging goods and services we enjoy today. This design has made possible, not only survival, but success for millions of individuals ill-prepared to meet life in the simple rugged days, say, in King Arthur's time.

The competition I speak of is competition which observes the rules of the game, using only moral means. Its other name is individual liberty. Every person is free to make his voluntary choices in the market place, deciding between competing producers which shall have his trade and between competing employers who shall have his services. Ill-advised political interventions have continuously threatened these freedoms and in so doing have impaired competition. Upon analysis this strange fact emerges: the evils so carelessly attributed to competi-

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tion by collectivists are actually due to politically sanctioned denials of competition which establish monopoly conditions.

It is said there are 50,000 ways of making a living. If we attempt to count the possible combinations, the number of ways of living, and possibly succeeding, becomes astronomical.

It was not always thus. In medieval times a man had little choice in selecting his life work. To be sure there were a few avenues open then that are closed now. But at most a few hundred occupations and trades would complete the list. For women the choice was limited, indeed. And if a person happened to be born with talents and abilities which did not fit into the limited pattern, his lot was sad enough.

Things are different, now. Freedom to compete has changed all that. Today our needs are so varied, so diversified, we can use a tremendous variety of skills, temperaments, and abilities – talents which would have availed their owners nothing, even a hundred years ago. There still remains the problem of finding what each can do, and wants to do best. But that problem is now receiving the best attention and thought we can give it.

I say the free enterprise, competitive reward system is the most humane, the most merciful, as well as the most efficient one ever conceived by man. Nor need it be defended on mere theoretical lines. It has demonstrated what it can do. It has been proved. It works.

This system holds out the opportunity for vast achievement and service for those with talent and determination, of moderate success and reasonable happiness for those with normal brains who are willing to work. And yet the socialist, the "leveler downer," the "divider upper" would trade away this priceless opportunity for assurance of a bare existence, his soul and body in a strait jacket, with the freedom and prerogatives of a sheep.

Personal Experience

I know about competition. Let me tell you about my own experience, not that it is particularly interesting or important, but because it serves to emphasize the points I have tried to make – that our system is humane and merciful, offering the weak, the unprepared, even the misfit, opportunity for a measure of success and a fairly satisfactory life, if he will do his part.

I was born on a farm, the first of seven children. There was poverty, and hard work for all. I was small and scrawny, in a school of big tough boys. I could not "com-

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pete" in sports, or in other physical activities.

Leaving school at 14, I had a little competition in the matter of finding a job in the city, where there were thousands of big tall handsome college graduates available. Arbitrary height and weight requirements ruled out many other jobs I might have filled. Too, I discovered that in town a knowledge of farm animals and farm work was not particularly useful. And yet, so great and diversified were our needs, even 30 years ago, I was able to find a work for which experience and temperament fitted me.

Came a time when I decided to marry. In a city where there were approximately 1½ men for every woman, this meant more competition. With plenty of personality defects, one serious affliction, and a heavy burden of debt, it was necessary to dig deep to find compensating factors. It was not easy. But this is important: it was possible. It was possible because I had the good fortune to be living under a competitive system where, if one door closed, another opened. It was possible, too, because at that time the social planners had not yet got in their deadly work of undermining the pride and moral integrity of the youth of the nation.

Today I am in the business of writing and selling ideas, my own, and those of others. If anyone doesn't believe that spells competition, I suggest he try it! And yet, so varied are the needs in this line of work, there is now room for thousands of scribes, when in Dickens' day no more than a few hundred could make livings with their pens.

I do not say that all may succeed, following the Alger formulas, hard work, thrift, honesty, in a competitive system. There is the factor of luck, fate, misfortune. But it is certainly true that more can succeed, better, than under any other plan yet devised. And for those who are denied conspicuous success, either through fate or their own limitations, this plan holds out a real hope that every individual may make something dignified, decent, and worth-while of his or her life.

It was Hendrick Van Loon who defined success as "doing passably well the thing you consider important above all else." To some this means growing the most beautiful rose, catching the biggest fish, lifting the heaviest weight, reaching the highest note in the vocal scale, or perhaps having the most extensive collection of dried pig ears. It is a fortunate arrangement of nature that we lose, eventually, the desire to do things wholly beyond our ability, and to take pleasure in the things we can

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do well. It would seem that nature wants everyone to succeed, and is trying her best to make it possible.

Viewed in its true light, success, and all it implies, comes within the reach of most of us, in one form or another. It is not free. If it were, it would have no value. Then too, there must be desire. Many do not have it.

Neither socialism nor any of its diluted philosophies has anything to offer the strong, the competent, and resourceful, the brave, efficient, and able, except confiscation of their rightful wage. Socialism is rooted in weakness, error, and tyranny. Its only appeal is to the weak, and those who believe themselves weak.

But the "little fellow," the submerged, underprivileged, the "underdog" has found no relief for his predicament under socialism. On the contrary, the little he had has been taken away. This wicked and insane delusion has never been content merely to distribute poverty and misery equally among all. It demands that men forfeit their spiritual rights as human beings and become as docile beasts of the field. That is what socialism has done to every people who ever adopted it as a way of life. That is what it is trying to do to America, and will, if it can.

As an entity, as an honest (though mistaken), political philosophy, neither socialism nor communism poses any threat to America. Its position is too absurd, its failures too dismal to attract any but the moronic fringe. The real danger lies in those millions of "stanch" Republicans, "stanch" Democrats, Independents, idealists, liberals, who decry socialism with one hand and abet it with the other.

These folks believe a "little socialism" won't hurt us, forgetting that every hop head began with a little morphine or heroin. The little calls for more and more, for socialism, the true parasite that it is, has nothing with which to feed itself. It must spread until it consumes the whole plant, and both die.

There is yet time enough to root out this pernicious loathesome weed from the garden of our lives. But we must attack it with every means at hand, in all its guises and masquerades. We must be alert to see that our thinking isn't fogged by such terms as "civil rights," "underprivileged masses," "cheap public power," "more abundant life" – words honorable enough upon a time, but now calling for quotes to identify their true source. For this leopard does change his spots, his name, his tactics, but never his devilish purpose, which is to enslave and degrade all mankind. • • •

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Devaney, Inc.

T. Robert Ingram

Education is A PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITY

I HAVE HAD a continuing interest in the schools of our country ever since, as a boy, I was plunged into the socialist experiment started in the Denver public schools in 1925 and 1926. In one way or another I have kept an eye on school matters throughout my own school and college life, during thirteen years of newspaper work, and ten years as seminarian and priest in the Episcopal Church. So, in the two parishes I have served, the weekday education of children has been one of my major concerns, and I have helped to found two schools, Southwest Episcopal School in Houston and St. John's School in Abilene.

There were three main reasons for founding these schools. First, there was the conviction that all instruction, or teaching, or education (whatever we call it) is basically religious and therefore of primary concern to the Christian Church. Second, there was a general agreement that schools now controlled by tax-supported agencies are unsatisfactory. Not only are they unable to offer the desired kind of doctrinal instruction, but also they are falling behind the traditional high standards of Christian scholarship. Third, there was, and is, a need to use our money to the full advantage since we are a community of strictly limited resources.

Convinced of the correctness of the thesis that all education is basically religious, it follows that we, as a church are forced to accept responsibility in society for this duty. Just as the church is a place to worship, so is the church also a place to acquire, interpret, and evaluate knowledge. We cannot expect non-Christians to do Christian teaching, and we do not look for Christians who are not active in the church to do so. More-

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over, since we believe all education is a religious function, and since as Christians we believe the Church and the State are separate and autonomous organisms of society, we believe it is a primary duty of the Church to supervise and conduct its own schools. It should not pass the buck to the State, whose social function is quite different.

The Old Testament authority to teach may be found in the famous Sixth Chapter of Deuteronomy: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." These mighty words echo and color the Great Commission of the Risen Christ: "Go ye therefore and teach *all* nations."

Consult the Record

The obligation of the Christian Church to provide schooling is thus inherent in her very existence. Her ability to do so in the United States today has been demonstrated dramatically in the last five years. The extent of the Roman Catholic school system is well-known. The Lutherans of the Missouri Synod are equally well-established. And a virile school movement has developed in Baptist, Evangelical, Episcopalian, and other groups in this decade.

A program of weekday education is well within the capacity of any active church. All that is needed is that strange ingredient of conviction that flowers into deeds. This may be accomplished without hostile action of any kind against any other schools.

Church people do not need to overthrow the "public" school system; they do not need to organize a political machine; they do not even have to formulate a philosophy of education. Nobody who rejects the idea of a school system run as part of the Christian Church need be forced to support the church school with his earnings, or to send his children there. But if freedom includes the right of churchmen to send their children to a school where education is consistent with their faith, then churchmen have a similar right to establish their own schools. Certainly nobody else can be expected to undertake this necessary job on their behalf.

The principle that schooling is a function of the Church is one that was never questioned by the Founding Fathers of our country, and has been lost sight of for only a few decades – a relatively short time in the life of Christendom and of our people. Until 1837 when Horace Mann introduced in Massachusetts the first state board of education, even tax moneys for schools were expended largely

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through church institutions; and even Mann did not live to see his Prussian-inspired plan run its course to the removal of religion itself. That this end result was clearly foreseen and greatly feared in Mann's own time, however, is shown by the repeated assurances he had to give that he had no such intention and that he agreed that religion was the foundation of education. In 1848 he wrote:

> I avail myself of this, the last opportunity which I may ever have, to say in regard to all affirmations or intimations that I have ever attempted to exclude religious instructions from the schools, or to exclude the Bible from the schools, or to impair the force of that volume, that they are now, and always have been, without substance or semblance of truth.

School and Church Confined

The church-controlled structure of schools is still to be seen in our nonstate universities and colleges, all but a few of which were founded under the auspices of some branch of the Church. The return of primary and secondary schools to the sphere of church control is no departure from either tradition or reason, but rather a restoration of both.

It is a lie to speak of "freedom in education" if parents have no choice of what is to be taught to their children, but must accept a majority political decision as to curriculum. In tax-supported schools, this is the case, and must be the case. It would certainly breach a principle if sectarian doctrines were taught in schools operated by any unit of government, federal or local. Yet when religious bodies have their own schools, the possibility of choice thus made available for churchmen in no way militates against the "freedom" of statists to continue to tax everyone for state-run schools to which they can send their children. Since we may reasonably suppose the statists will continue to thrive in our midst for a long time, the fear that there will be no state-supported schools if there are also church schools is groundless. The devotees of the tax-supported school system often complain that to allow such sectarian schools would be a divisive force, making for disunity. This argument, however, begs the real question. The real question is simply what is the real source of our unity – Caesar or Christ?

Those who believe that the only binding force for a people is in the police power – civil government – would, as a corollary of that belief, see this cohesive power threatened by the mere existence of denominational school systems. More mature people, how-

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ever, know that uniformity under the sword is not the unity we want anyway. The real unity for even a religiously variegated people lies in a universal principle that reads: "Whatever you are, be a good one." There is no necessary disunity for Americans in our diversified religious picture. The variety of privately supported religious bodies is rather the ground for our astonishing national harmony. In any event, people who put their trust in God, as Americans profess with their very money to do, must rely on the unity derived from allegiance to God rather than from a monolithic system of education answerable only to civil government.

That this truth has come home with real force to many in our nation today is evidenced by the number of church schools that have sprung up from coast to coast since World War II. I am in touch with developments among various denominations, but I will limit my remarks to my personal experiences.

A Plan Carried Through

In my present parish, school and church were planned and developed together. St. Thomas was a new parish, and so it was possible to conceive church and school as a unit from the start, and to plan every phase of growth as a whole. This was particularly helpful in laying out buildings and buying property. By the winter of 1954, the Vestry had found a site for its proposed church and school and set a timetable for moving to the site and opening school in the fall of 1955.

There was no cash on hand except for a small building fund, and no financial guarantee. If we wanted a church, it was going to cost us less than $150,000 for minimum requirements of land, Sunday school rooms, and a place to worship. At least a third of this cost would go for Sunday school rooms. We did not have enough money to spend $50,000 for rooms to use for one hour each week, especially when we would also be required to pay taxes for the public school building that our children would attend during the week. While one building was in use, the other would be empty. We think one building in one community is enough. Now it is true we have to pay school taxes anyway. We have to pay more, therefore, than we would if church schools were the rule rather than the exception and more church buildings were so used. Nonetheless, we felt we would be getting value received for what we would pay extra in the quality of schooling for our children.

A headmaster was engaged in

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April, a school board appointed by the Vestry, teachers hired for kindergarten and six grades of school, and registrations opened. I remember talking to one parent in my temporary office in a rented house adjoining the new site. She said, "Where is the school?" I pointed to the vacant five acres. "There," I said. She signed up. Southwest Episcopal School is now completing its second year of operation with enrollment of 112.

Cost per Pupil

The average tuition is $250 a year. That compares with the cost in the two fine Houston private schools of like operation of $700 a year. We are making available to people of modest means an education that will equip their children to compete on the highest levels in the finest colleges and most exacting professions in the nation. Moreover, we think our economics are of vital concern to the general public – the tax-paying public. We think it is good sense dollar-wise for the general public – which is already under extreme pressure for school buildings –to make use of church educational buildings or parish houses already in existence in every city. Many of the same people pay for them anyway. Why build more? Why build double and parallel facilities?

The actual cost per pupil at Southwest Episcopal School in 1956-57 was $260 per year. This was an inefficient year, with two classes of only 11 or 12 students each. Estimated cost per pupil next year, with low enrollment of 180 now in sight, will be $225. With a school of 210 students, or only six less than the capacity, the average annual cost would be $191.60. This is for a school whose teachers are paid salaries comparable to those in the public schools; a school where classes are limited to 24; a school where there are available the resources of the entire church community which includes a score of Doctors of Science, Doctors of Philosophy, university professors, and other professional people to say nothing of business executives. By comparison the cost to the general public of educating each child – apart from the expense of construction and maintenance of school buildings – was $230.40 a year per pupil in 1953-54. Salary increases last year raised this nearly 10 per cent to at least $245.00. If the general public can have top quality education at a cost of at least $50 per pupil less than it costs in tax-supported schools; and if it can at the same time eliminate the duplication of classroom buildings by restoring the schools to church control and supervision, the sav-

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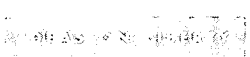
ings will be enormous. The benefits of school construction now being asked for through federal financial grants, can be made immediately available from coast to coast simply by using existing church buildings. No time is lost in construction, no more money spent.

The best index of the Southwest's strength and achievement is in the enthusiasm of the parents and the reputation in the community. This has been so favorable that a second section of kindergarten and of first grade will be added during 1957-58 and the present combined fifth and sixth grades will be separated. There is a good possibility of a capacity enrollment of 216. Four new teachers are to be added to the staff, and three classrooms. This has been accomplished with no advertising except the enthusiasm of parents of children now in school.

Tax-supported schools are required to take all comers and work with them for at least ten to twelve years in most states. Obviously, they cannot conform to any particular church's sectarian position. In addition, since the schools must accommodate all children, they can neither point toward the slow scholars, nor the fast ones. They cannot establish a discipline of learning expected, not of the majority, but of the skilled and expert few. As a result, unless there are special schools to provide the highest possible scholastic equipment to those who want it, our nation can in one generation be stripped of an irreplaceable resource.

My experience has shown that any ordinary American community which can support a church can operate a school in connection therewith. If we could do it, anybody can. No extra capital funds are necessary, no fancy window dressing. All that is required for a school are teachers, pupils, and a place to meet. I believe it was Mark Hopkins who taught on the end of a log. The school can pay its own operating expenses with modest tuition, or the cost can be absorbed by the congregation.

It is not a matter of merely arguing for the soundness of a theory. This can be done. • • •



Attention, Parents

UNTIL THE FAMILY again accepts the teaching tasks it has abdicated so freely to the schools, education must be overburdened.

CANON BERNARD IDDINGS BELL, 1955

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VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE STATE

SYLVESTER PETRO

A STRIKING FEATURE of the free society is the diversity of the voluntary associations it tends to breed. A voluntary association is potential whenever two or more members of the free society decide that it would be mutually advantageous to pool their efforts, or a part of their efforts, in the achievement of a mutually desirable objective. Even a relatively ungregarious member of the free society may find himself belonging to more voluntary associations than he can enumerate offhand. His associations may include economic, professional, educational, health, good-fellowship, sporting, and religious societies or associations, to mention only the possibilities which come to mind instantly.

Nor is there anything in the theory of the free society which confines a voluntary organization to any particular function. The functions of an association may be as various as its members wish them to be and can agree upon. The mutual interests of the membership define the objectives of the voluntary association.

The only limitation upon the voluntary association in the free society is the standard limitation placed upon the activities of all men in such a society: the voluntary association as a separate entity may not invade the property rights of persons; it may not engage in violent, coercive, or fraudulent conduct.

While the function of the voluntary association in the free society is to advance the interests of its members, whatever those interests may be, the function of the state in such a society is to preserve the peace: to prevent and remedy expropriations, to establish and maintain conditions which insure

Dr. Petro is Professor of Law, New York University School of Law. This article is a condensation of Chapter 6 from his book, The Labor Policy of the Free Society. *New York: The Ronald Press Company, Copyright 1957. 339 pp. Indexed. $5.00.*

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the freedom of persons to go tranquilly about their business. The state establishes the conditions of peace and freedom; within that environment men cooperating singly or in groups are free to exercise all their ability, ingenuity, power, and imagination to improve the lot of man on earth.

Preservation of the peace involves insuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, and establishing an effective system of justice. These, in the free society, are the primary and essential functions of the state. They are the primary and essential functions because they are the things, desired by and necessary to free men, which an institution organized like a state can best do and which no other form of organization can do as well.

Of all the insights afforded by the theory of the free society none perhaps is more significant than the teaching that by its very nature and inner structure the state is an organization well-designed to secure the peace of society, but rather poorly designed as regards the creative and productive functions. Appreciation of this teaching is enhanced by a comparison of the constitution and the authority of voluntary associations with those of the state.

Composition

In the theory of the free society, a voluntary association is composed of those who have freely chosen to form or join it, whereas *every* citizen is a member of the state and *every* person within the physical boundaries of the state is subject to its jurisdiction.

Membership in a voluntary association must be volitional for more than merely grammatical reasons. An association entitled to compel membership by violent, coercive, or fraudulent means would not only no longer be a *voluntary* association; it would have the privilege of destroying property rights. A voluntary association is a contractual arrangement among persons. To say that a person may be compelled to participate in such an arrangement is to deny him the right to refuse to make a contract which, in the exercise of his own choice, he would rather not make; and that, in turn, amounts to a deprivation of a basic property right.

The strictly voluntary association prospers only if it performs a needed function relatively well. And whether or not its performance is good can best be judged by whether or not it survives the test of the free market. It does not matter what kind of private association we examine; whether it be a business enterprise, an as-

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sociation of such enterprises, a bar or medical association, a religious group, a charitable foundation — in every instance the best test of the effectiveness of the organization is whether or not it stands up in competition with other organizations engaged in like or competing functions, or with other methods of attaining the ends which it seeks. The test is not necessarily absent merely because there does not happen to be another such organization in existence at any given time. The opportunity to compete is what really counts. There would be no test only if persons were not free to form competing organizations at will— only, that is, if "voluntary" organizations were permitted to practice compulsion, or if they were given a protected monopoly by the state.

Permitting compulsion by private associations would seem to presuppose that association is always superior to individual action. As a general proposition, however, such a presumption would certainly be inaccurate. Associations sometimes provide more effective methods of getting things done; but not always.

In those instances in which associated efforts are more productive than individual effort, the ordinary effects of free competition between individual men and associations of men will make the point clear to all. Associations will be formed, for men well understand their own interests. But it serves no socially useful purpose, even in such circumstances, to give a private association the privilege to compel membership.

But while compulsory membership in a private association conflicts with the theory of the free society, that theory holds it necessary for every person to be a member and subject to the rules of the state which has sovereign power in the territory in which he happens to be.

Protection of Property Rights

A society determined to establish the conditions of freedom must have the means of suppressing or discouraging attempts by any individual, group, or group of groups to invade the property rights of others. Nothing less than the full power of the society will adequately serve this end. In consequence, the society's defender of property rights must be able to count upon the life and treasure of every member of the society; and the organization so constituted, the organization which is authorized to represent the greatest combination of power of the society, is called the state.

It is unrealistic to assume that the state can perform its basic

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functions without the power to compel the acquiescence of all in the measures designed to serve those functions. One may regret that violators of the peace and other invaders of property rights exist, or that superior force concentrated in that agency of society called the state is necessary in order to provide reasonable security against criminals. Yet political science must operate within the deficiencies of the other sciences; until biologists and other natural scientists demonstrate a better method of dealing with antisocial persons who would expropriate their fellow members of society, the compulsory powers associated with the state will continue to be necessary if the free society is to carry on.

Compulsory and coercive powers are needed also if the state is to perform its function of settling definitively the civil disputes over property and contract rights which continually arise among members of a free society. The state does not fulfill this function merely by formulating and promulgating clear-cut rules of law concerning property and contract rights. A large job is left even if the rules are supplemented by the best judicial system that can be conceived. That job is the one of seeing to it that the decisions of the judges, in applying the rules to the disputes brought before them, are obeyed.

The compulsory, coercive characteristics of the state must be contrasted to the voluntary character of private associations in the free society. Compulsion and coercion are necessary to keeping the peace; but freedom is indispensable to the achievement of the great spiritual-material goals of men. To utilize an agency conceived in terms of compulsion and coercion in order directly to achieve those goals, rather than merely indirectly by establishing the conditions of freedom for individuals, is to choose the less intelligent way of doing things and to invite confusion and ineffectiveness, if not disaster. These observations gain in cogency when one considers also the nature of the authority and power of the state, as contrasted with the authority and power of voluntary associations.

Authority and Power

The authority and power of a voluntary association differ essentially from the authority and power of the state. Strictly speaking, a voluntary association is a contractual arrangement; but the state may be called a contractual arrangement only in loose terms. The membership of a voluntary association may not contract to

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do together that which the law would not allow to any member as an individual; but the state both *may* and *can* do anything which representatives of a large enough majority of the people will countenance (and this is true, as we shall see, even under the Constitution of the United States).

The voluntary association has only such authority as its members agree to give it and only such power to act as is consistent with the ruling principles of the free society. The members may join together, and from their association they may reap benefits which none could secure from individual action; but they may not, in the free society, create in their association the authority to act in a way forbidden to individuals. Scientists may find their researches benefited by the pooling of their efforts, just as investors may find their purposes best served by putting their savings together; but neither group, any more than an individual, may invade property rights in promoting its interest.

Confounded by Numbers

While it is plain that an association may *not* engage in conduct prohibited to individuals, it is not nearly so plain that an association *may* take every kind of action open to individuals. At times the essential character of an act changes when done by many people concertedly. One person rushing down a sidewalk probably does not hamper the passage of others, not very much, anyway; but if five or six persons rush abreast, they will very probably materially affect the passage of others. One picket at the scene of a labor dispute will probably frighten no one, but multiply the pickets and the intimidatory potentialities increase. Where a single person refuses to work for an employer unless the employer agrees to hire only union members, the access of a nonunion worker to employment opportunities is probably not materially hampered; his chances of securing employment for which he is qualified are about as good as ever. But if a large enough group of men unites against an outsider, the effect may be to replace the competition which it is in the interest of the free society to foster with a genuinely monopolistic condition which involves essentially the vitiation of property rights. A man may find himself denied access to employment possibilities despite the fact that he is fully qualified to do the work involved, and indeed despite the fact that he is the best qualified man available in the judgment of persons offering employment.

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The "Contract Theory"

A precise formulation would have it, then, that in the free society the voluntary association has only such authority as its members may properly give it; and its members may not authorize their association to engage in conduct which invades the property rights of others, even though such conduct resembles that which, when done by an individual, does not invade property rights. Again, the rules lying within the authority of a voluntary association are rules applicable to and only binding upon members of the association; they cannot bind outsiders.

As a matter of history, the formation of some states has resembled in certain respects the methods of forming voluntary associations; and the fragmentary resemblance tends to lend color to the "contract theory" of the state. This theory holds that states generally are the product of a "social compact" among their members. Few careful students now accept the compact theory as a valid explanation of the actual genesis of states; there is, therefore, no need here to recount the historical researches and the analyses which have induced the virtually universal rejection of the compact theory. It does seem necessary, however, to establish the point that it can never be accurate to identify the kind of authority possessed by a state with that of voluntary, private associations.

In its origins, the government of the United States came about as close as any government in history to being the product of a deliberate contract among the men within its sovereign boundaries. Standard theory holds this government limited by the terms of the grant of power from the people expressed in the Constitution, and the Constitution did not take effect until approved by the people of the United States in the ratifying conventions.

Majority Rule

Speaking loosely, one may call the United States a government by consent of the governed. One would speak entirely too loosely, however, if he should go on to say that the government of the United States is a contractual arrangement. The votes of a *majority* in the ratifying conventions determined the adoption of the Constitution in the first place; and a large enough majority can do just about what it wishes as regards amending the Constitution. Majority rule is the principle which governs in the United States in matters involving the action of the state. And it serves no useful purpose to confuse the principle

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of majority rule with the principle of contract. The two principles are distinct in all material points, and confusing distinct principles is never conducive to fruitful analysis and accurate conclusions.

Contract means that the parties mutually assent to the rule which is to govern their conduct for the duration of their agreement. Majority rule means that the conduct of some persons is governed entirely without regard to their desires. In recognition of the fact that majority rule does not necessarily insure the most desirable results in all cases, some societies have more or less explicitly adopted the so-called limiting principle of "minority rights." In the nature of things, however, such a principle cannot mean very much, and no society today is really governed by that principle in any ultimate sense. It is open to a large enough majority in the United States to pass any kind of law it wishes, and it can do so entirely in accord with due process by amending the Constitution first if it wishes to pass a law which the Constitution presently forbids.

Doubtlessly, therefore, the principle of majority rule, rather than the principle of contract, defines the authority of the state, even in a society such as that of the United States. The fact that both historically and contemporaneously, some societies have defined the authority of the state on the basis of some principle other than majority rule (i.e., "divine right of kings," or "dictatorship of the proletariat" as divined by such an agency as a politbureau) should not be allowed to obscure the central feature of the analysis: namely, that the contract principle does not define the authority of the state.

Nor should we allow ourselves to be confused by the fact that, even in the "western democracies," it is true only in principle that majority rule governs. In the real world of action, it must be recognized, an actual majority is rarely responsible for the enactment of any law, even in countries which have relatively enlightened and interested electorates. What actually happens is that a majority *of those voting* in an election select representatives; and then, influenced in one way or another by pressure groups or leaders, the representatives legislate. The people in rare and relatively unimportant instances may be given the opportunity to vote directly by way of referendum on some proposals. Usually, however, the majority's will regarding any specific item of legislation is unknown, unknowable, and, in fact, unsought.

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Representative Government

Representative government – government by consent of the governed – is itself a principle of the free society; for no society can be really free, if indeed it can survive at all, which does not in one way or another, directly or indirectly, reflect the large consensus of its members. Representative governments may and often do enact and enforce measures which conflict with the theory of the free society. And yet representative government is essential to the free society because it is the best available method of changing governments without the disturbances and potential lawlessness that are inconsistent with the free society. Mises has put this matter definitively:

Liberalism realizes that the rulers, who are always a minority, cannot lastingly remain in office if not supported by the consent of the majority of those ruled. Whatever the system of government may be, the foundation upon which it is built and rests is always the opinion of those ruled that to obey and to be loyal to this government better serves their own interests than insurrection and the establishment of another regime. The majority has the power to do away with an unpopular government and uses this power whenever it becomes convinced that its own welfare requires it. In the long run there is no such thing as an unpopular government. Civil war and revolution are the means by which the discontented majorities overthrow rulers and methods of government which do not suit them. For the sake of domestic peace liberalism aims at democratic government. Democracy is therefore not a revolutionary institution. On the contrary, it is the very means of preventing revolutions and civil wars. It provides a method for the peaceful adjustment of government to the will of the majority. When the men in office and their policies no longer please the majority of the nation, they will — in the next election — be eliminated and replaced by other men espousing different policies.[1]

There are those who may regret some of the consequences of representative government, but there is really not very much that can be done about it. Mises' remarks are relevant here, too:

There is, of course, no guarantee that the voters will entrust office to the most competent candidate. But no other system could offer such a guarantee. If the majority of the nation is committed to unsound principles and prefers unworthy office-seekers, there is no remedy other than to try to change their mind by expounding more reasonable principles and recommending better men. A minority will never win lasting success by other means.[2]

[1]Mises, Ludwig. *Human Action.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949. pp. 149-50.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 150.

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The power of majorities to do "bad things" is thus as ineluctable as the power of the sun to destroy as well as to create. The theory of the free society is built around the awesome paradox that a free society must be free, also, to destroy itself. The hope held by those who understand the theory is that good sense will ultimately prevail among the people; that they will use the power of the state essentially to protect property rights, not to destroy them.

Consequences of the Confusion of Roles

Everyone now has some understanding of specialization and exchange, and of how application of that principle has transformed the condition of men. Yet, perhaps the most portentous and most prevalent error in the world today grows out of the common failure to realize that the insights to be derived from it apply also to governments. There is nothing supernatural about the state. The state is only a human agency, created by human beings and manned by human beings. Whatever the totalitarian mystics may try to make it, the state is really, as Somerset Maugham might say, only a human institution like another. In the free society it differs from other associations only in that it is based essentially on the principle of majority rule and has the exclusive legal right to use compulsion, force, and violence.

These special characteristics equip the state particularly well to preserve the peace of society; indeed, as already noted, they are specifically designed to that end. But the trouble is that they also leave in the hands of the men in charge of the machinery of the state the power to try to do anything else they may wish to do — *and the only limiting factor of any real significance lies in a proper popular understanding of the principle of division of labor, specialization, and exchange.*

Specialization and Exchange

This principle declares that it is best to leave to a person or institution only the function or functions which that person or institution performs better than any other person or institution. It teaches, moreover, that if one person does several things supremely well, everyone is still better off if he concentrates on one and lets the next best men do the others. So, if Mr. X is an excellent plumber and machinist, but an unexcelled physician, he and everyone else will be much better off if he concentrates on being a physician and leaves the plumbing and machinist work to others specializing therein. If Mr. X insists upon

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doing them all, he may well end up doing nothing very effectively; in any case he and the plumber and the machinist will not profit as much as they would if they all took advantage of the principle of specialization and exchange.[3]

States characteristically take a hand today in a great number of activities unrelated to keeping the peace. Here in the United States, federal, state, and local governments engage in just about all the kinds of activities known to man. They run schools and hospitals; they operate golf courses, amusement parks, and other forms of recreation; they build and maintain roads and sewage systems; run production establishments of various kinds; generate and sell electric and other kinds of power; help farmers, small businessmen, and some tenants; subsidize such industries as aviation and shipping directly and others indirectly by way of tariffs. They do a virtual infinity of other little things related to the foregoing functions, but unrelated to the function of keeping the peace.

Of almost everything that governments in the United States do, one thing may be said: the means of accomplishment are derived from taxing the citizenry; that is, the governments' activities proceed by way of compulsion. This is as true with respect to the functions associated with keeping the peace as it is with the interventionist measures of the kind just sketched. But there is one great difference. In preserving domestic tranquility, the state serves the whole society as such; every member of society owes everything he has or hopes to have to civilization, and therefore has no ground for objecting to equal taxes levied in order to preserve civilized society. But interventionist measures do not characteristically serve the whole society as such; instead, as a general rule, they serve one or another minority group *at the expense* of the society as a whole.

Invitation to Chaos

When one properly understands the operation of the political process, even in a tolerably advanced representative government such as that of the United States, he is forced to concede that a tradition of government action for the benefit of anything less than the whole body of taxpayers invites chaos. It tends to lead to the pitting of group against group, or at least to the process of "group accommodation," to use a current idiom. We may find ourselves once again

[3] Cf. Ricardo, David. *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation.* Everyman's Library. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. pp. 77-94, 253 ff.

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fitting Maine's definition of the primitive society: "It has for its units, not individuals, but groups of men."

Interventionist legislation is always proposed by some group asking for a special privilege at the expense of the general taxpaying population. But if golfers get their golf course, how can one deny a similar benefit to bowlers, or chess players, or aviation enthusiasts? If dairy farmers are subsidized, how can one resist a request for similar aid by peanut farmers or cotton planters? There is no rational basis for rejecting a subsidy request by people who would like to grow bananas under glass in New England, or orchids, or coffee; that is to say, no rational basis other than that dictated to legislators by the vagaries of politics and political alignments.

This is interventionist government by pressure groups. There are those who defend this kind of thing by saying that, in the long run, such government tends to dispense more or less equal benefits to all groups. Thus, while the general public is exploited by special subsidies, devices such as rent and price controls and "social" security measures "tend to even things out." But the fact is, of course, that in neither the long run nor the short run can such a blunt and relatively savage instrument as group political pressure produce any kind of equal distribution of benefits. Someone is always going to be hurt more than he is helped. Moreover, the fact that two wrongs have never made a right does not mean that multiple wrongs can make a right. For *every* special subsidy amounts to a wrong against the undifferentiated persons who make up the general taxpaying public (that is, against those who pay the taxes but do not receive the benefits for which their taxes pay); and the wrong is aggravated, not remedied, by each additional subsidy. Generally reduced productivity is the unavoidable mediate result; and the completely regimented society, engulfed in the totalitarian state, the ultimate product.[4]

Forgetting the Purpose

Again, the never-ending potentialities of special governmental subsidies tend to divert government from its primary and essential social function. Two somewhat independent factors are at work here. First, the task of contending with all the pressure groups who come begging for special privileges becomes a labyrinthine and all-absorbing one. The newspapers

[4]Cf. Hayek, Friedrich A. *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944. pp. 61 ff.

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daily carry stories of this or that pressure group asking the government to "step in." Congress, the Chief Executive, and his subordinates have about all they can do to placate persons and groups who want to make sure that they will not be passed up. There is little time left for careful consideration and enforcement of the laws necessary to protect the property rights which alone can secure the general welfare of the society.

In the second place, contrary to some opinion, not even governments are omniscient and omnipotent; not even they can do the impossible; and there is a limit even to taxes. Interventionist government by pressure groups may be able reasonably to satisfy the demands of the most insistent seekers after special privilege; but when that has been done, there is little talent and less money left to perform the basic functions of the state.

The state seems to get into its worst troubles when it takes over the job of providing for the economic welfare of individuals and groups. In the free society, that is the job of individuals themselves, who are free to form voluntary associations when independent action seems inferior to association as a means of reaching desired ends. Few men are in a position to have a golf course of their own; but the free society recognizes a right in golfers to combine their resources in order to maintain a golf course. Not every person is able to make a suitable living through farming; but in the free society those who cannot make a living by farming alone are always free to join together into more efficient agricultural production units, or to try some other occupation, the product of which is in more demand than farm commodities.

Ultimately, if government by pressure group follows its inherent logic, there is no doubt that the ability of individuals to provide for themselves through their own action or through voluntary associations must be drastically impaired. If the agency of force and compulsion assumes the functions allocated in the free society to persons and their voluntary associations, it must take from individual persons the wherewithal to do so. No great insight is necessary in order to realize that the individuals will then no longer have the wherewithal to provide for themselves and to forge ahead with creative plans for realizing their own potentialities. • • •

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A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK

SMALL STATES ARE BEST

John Chamberlain

LEOPOLD KOHR, a writer of knockabout charm despite his professorial background, throws his *The Breakdown of Nations* (Rinehart, $6.00) smack in the face of virtually every modern shibboleth. He tells us why there can be no peace through empire or pursuit of the universal state. He isolates the "political cancer" (his word for it) which consumed the League of Nations and will surely be the death of the United Nations. He explains why so much of the energy of the contemporary world must be devoted to overcoming the inconveniences created by the progress which has heaped us all together in great urban warrens. Incidentally, Dr. Kohr does not expect to convert anybody. We learn, he seems to say, only through failure; and the only cure for the sterility of the universal state is to try it on for size and watch it burst into smithereens after the forthcoming inevitable war between the U.S. and Russia.

Dr. Kohr's theory is that life is only manageable through cultivation of the "small-cell principle." Anything big, he says, is bound to break down through instability. Bigness can, indeed, be handled through the principle of decentralization, as many U.S. business concerns (General Motors, Johnson and Johnson) have discovered. But only when the decentralization permits true local responsibility in the various parts. The parts, in turn, must be small parts, no one of which has the latent power to impose an imperialistic design on any of the other units.

Inasmuch as political Bigness is the worst sort of Bigness (it has a monopoly of force to back it up), Dr. Kohr is primarily concerned with explaining why Great States are their own Nemesis. But Dr. Kohr's mind is only interested in politics for purposes of outwitting and circumventing the politicos. Though he is by trade a political economist (he teaches economics and public administration at the University of Puerto Rico), Dr. Kohr is actually far more interested in his hobbies and his avocations. He delights in things which, though "socially useless," minister

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to the creative individual's pleasure. He applauds artists who retire to ivory towers to create "true moments of civilization" in defiance of the "clamor of the masses." He glories in such rulers as the princes of Salzburg, who, lacking the military power to enlarge their territorial possessions, were forced to "divert" their aggressiveness into hewing theatres out of mountainsides and building churches ("all wholly unnecessary but each more beautiful than the other").

The great ages, says Dr. Kohr, were those of the Greek city states and the small medieval principalities and free cities. In such "small-cell" communities men could provide for their needs and still have time for "musing and slowness of pace." The worst age, so Dr. Kohr continues, is any age in which the individual can find no relief from the necessity to engage in "stultifying social service." Or, he might have added, no relief from a surplusage of stultifying individual self-service. In a notable passage on the disappearance of housemaids, Dr. Kohr observes that every housemaid has now become either a wife or a stenographer. This has had a paradoxical issue: it has turned every secretary and housewife into a housemaid – but without a day off. The housewife is now, truly, the house's wife.

The good society, in Dr. Kohr's definition, is one which allows a creative individual to participate in a great variety of personal experience. But variety, he insists, is only possible in a small state. Large states require – and compel – large-scale specialization. But in small states there is no need for such specialists as social analysts, efficiency experts, or singers whose talent is for producing mass swooning. In small states mechanics gather with greengrocers, and professors of history hobnob with artists in the café. In large states, the exigencies of organization – trade associations, conventions, and the like – compel mechanics to spend most of their time with mechanics, garment workers with garment workers, and journalists with journalists. "If a businessman knows a sculptor" in a large state, so Dr. Kohr says, "he is suspected of being a sex pervert. If an engineer knows a philosopher, he is suspected of being a spy . . . It is considered snobbish, indecent, or treasonable to mix with anybody not of one's kind."

All of this is exaggeration, of course. But Dr. Kohr is a master of the parody which conveys truth. When he remarks that modern authors lack the "opportunity to experience the multitude of social and human problems that constitute life," he hits close to the mark. To know anything today, an

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author must keep a staff of researchers who "do the learning and experiencing for him." Dr. Kohr thinks it significant that England's period of literary greatness, the Elizabethan, came when she was a "quarrelsomely insignificant" minor power. And it is no coincidence, he says, "that many of the most . . . fertile contributors to modern English literature, Shaw, Joyce, Yeats, or Wilde, were Irish, members of one of the world's smallest nations."

Dr. Kohr is not against war. But he thinks wars make sense only when they are small, personal combats – say as between two armored knights. He objects to such "universal" political mechanisms as the League of Nations or United Nations precisely because they tend to turn small, personal conflicts – such as between Israelis and Egyptians for control of the Sinai Peninsula – into universal combats between great power blocs. He objects to Big Unions and to corporations which believe in industry-wide bargaining because they cannot fight an economic war without disrupting an entire economy.

Having proved to his own satisfaction that smallness, not ripeness, is all, Dr. Kohr tells us how we could work back to a world of small states and still retain the advantages of large-scale federation. The successful federations, he notes, are those of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Swiss Republic. The failures in the field of federation include Bismarck's Germany, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and (though it is not an example of true federation) the League of Nations. Dr. Kohr observes that the United States, Canada, and Switzerland have one thing in common: their component units are small units, none of which could really hope to impose its will on the federation as a whole. In the German federation, on the other hand, Prussia (the cancerous cell) had the power first to expel Austria and then to impose its designs on Bavaria, Baden, and the Free City of Hamburg.

Divide or Explode

The lesson to be derived from all this is obvious: to federalize the world, we must first break all the great powers up into their medieval regional units. Great Britain must devolve into England, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man before she is fit to send delegates (on the regional representation plan) to a European parliament at Strasburg. France must become Burgundy, the Midi, Aquitaine, and Normandy. Germany must become Saxony, Brandenburg, and the

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Rhineland (no Prussia!). Only if the monsters cease to be monstrous could such small nations as Switzerland, Denmark, and Austria trust themselves to the decisions of a Strasburg government.

Naturally, Dr. Kohr is under no illusions that France will become Burgundy, the Midi, and so on. He thinks the world is fated to "unify" into two great-power confrontations, with Washington and Moscow as the opposing capitals. And he says, categorically, that the "critical mass" of the Iron Curtain and anti-Iron Curtain worlds will result in fission and wild explosion.

This fission, says Dr. Kohr, won't be nice to experience, but it will have the virtue of creating a totally unmanageable situation for the victor power. Unable to handle all things from one center of power, the emergent tyrant won't last very long. And out of the chaos of "One World" there will come a new world of small, regional units, which, like the Greek city states, will produce another cultural efflorescence. If our descendants wish to participate in the efflorescence, however, they must be careful to choose their family trees. The ones who have ancestors in any city which is fated to be a Hiroshima just won't be on hand for the small-state millennium. • • •

American Faith

By John Sutherland Bates. New York City: W. W. Norton, 1957. 479 pp. $6.95.

THIS is the second printing of a book which received favorable notice when it first appeared in 1940. The book has not changed, but scholarly outlook and understanding has, and the book leaves a less favorable impression today.

The American faith, as the late Professor Bates viewed it, "is summarized today in the term 'democracy.' " This faith did not arise out of eighteenth century social conflicts, as some have supposed, but rather took its origin in the Reformation. "Democracy," he writes, "was envisaged in religious terms long before it assumed a political terminology." This large volume begins, therefore, with our European heritage, with the Reformation considered as a Social Revolution, and urges that this Reformation was completed in America.

The story, which stops with the Civil War, is told in pleasant narrative style with a minimum of footnotes and no bibliography. It is a useful book for one who wishes a compact account of the major religious denominations which helped to shape American life and institutions, who likes to explore some of the fantastic religious byways traveled by cults

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such as the Shakers or look in on such perfectionist communities as that established at Oneida.

The merits of this book, however, are balanced by its shortcomings. There is much more to the American faith than the reader can gain from this volume. Looking backward to the origins of that faith, it must surely be admitted that it is more than the mere flowering of a growth rooted in "the radical lower-class sects of the Protestant Reformation." American ideas and idealism are deeply imbedded in Christendom, which itself is a blending of the heritage of faith, reason, and law deriving from Israel, Greece, Rome, and beyond – as deBurgh demonstrates in his *Legacy of the Ancient World*. In other directions, the book needs to be supplemented by such works as Garrett's *The American Story*, Beston's *American Memory*, and Morley's *The Power in the People*.

EDMUND A. OPITZ

Theory and History: An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution

By Ludwig von Mises. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 384 pp. $6.00.

SINCE MEN first started to record events, they have sought to understand why things happened as they did. It has been suggested variously that all actions of man were predestined according to some superior over-all design; that they were merely the consequences of physiological phenomena; or that they arose solely from environmental conditions or characteristics of society or race. Such explanations, however, as Ludwig von Mises shows in his new book, are inconsistent with real life on this earth as we know it.

Dr. Mises is the leading exponent today of the Austrian School of economics. He has taught and lectured in a dozen different countries and now holds a position as Visiting Professor at New York University. His writings have spelled out in detail many aspects of economics, explaining in every instance how the free market is the basis of individual freedom. In this new book, he applies his knowledge of the theory of human action and of market operations to the interpretation of history and historical philosophies.

The major part of the book is devoted to analyzing various interpretations of history and to comparing each in turn with the philosophy of utilitarianism which Mises calls "a philosophy of individualism," because it "rejects universalism, collectivism, and totalitarianism." One by one, he refutes the philosophies of history

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that deny freedom of the individual to act as he sees fit. Dr. Mises calls attention to "the emotional appeal which cognizance of this freedom has, and the idea of moral responsibility which it engenders. . . . One of the fundamental conditions of man's existence and action is the fact that he does not know what will happen in the future." He points out, on the other hand, that positivism, behaviorism, and scientism, for instance, reduce the role of the individual to that of a robot. He shows that the Marxist idea of "class conflict" denies the obvious fact that individuals act according to what they consider to be their own interest, not that of their "class."

Dr. Mises explains why the claim that environmental factors alone determine a person's ideas and actions – and thus, history – is a contradiction of reality. In fact, the situation is the other way round. It is ideas that are responsible for social institutions, technological and political changes, and economic conditions. This thesis, the importance of ideas, runs like a refrain throughout the book.

Men are rational creatures, Mises reminds us. Their actions are the results of thought and reason. Acting men seek various ends, according to their individual value judgments and ideas, using means they believe, or hope, will be effective. They do not always use proper means, and they may change their minds after making a decision to act, but this does not deny that men act rationally and purposively in the hope of gaining desired ends.

Men frequently act in cooperation. Their reason tells them that there are advantages in social cooperation, due to the fact that specialization and the division of labor are more productive than self-sufficiency. This recognition leads most men to prefer peaceful relations to strife and conflict with their fellow men. Indeed, the history of civilization consists of the development of specialization and division of labor. Thus, the desire for social cooperation is an important motive for individual action.

It is the task of the historian to record and to explain, insofar as his knowledge, understanding, and opportunities permit, the manner in which events arise from the individual actions of individual men. To explain why men act, he must make use of "specific understanding" as well as knowledge in all other pertinent fields, including economics. The more complete his knowledge and understanding, the more accurate can be his interpretation of historical data.

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Modern historians tend to be impressed by mass phenomena and the actions of large groups. In this, their writings reflect the current fallacies of "pseudo-economics." They are inclined to forget that history always deals with individuals. Even the actions of societies and long-term historical trends are traceable ultimately to many small and interrelated individual actions. When men cooperate or act together as members of groups, they are, nevertheless, still acting as individuals under the influence of certain specific ideas.

History is made by man. The conscious intentional actions of individuals, great and small, determine the course of events insofar as it is the result of the interaction of all men. But the historical process is not designed by individuals. It is the composite outcome of the intentional actions of all individuals. No man can plan history.

Although the advantages to be gained from interpersonal cooperation under a system of division of labor and interpersonal exchange on an unhampered market have long been recognized, many persons, historians included, believe that an inevitable conflict of interests exists among individuals and among groups. The belief persists that there are "have-nots" in the world, precisely because there are "haves." This is true, of course, in societies where wealth is the result of special privilege. But in a free market, i.e., under capitalism, no conflicts need exist among the rightly understood interests of all members. Because many historians have failed to understand this, they have helped to popularize the idea of conflicting interests as well as other neo-mercantilist ideas which lead to international conflict and aggressive nationalism.

Perhaps the most startling idea brought to light by Dr. Mises in this book concerns the role historians have played in promoting various types of collectivism. By adopting philosophies of history based on economic fallacies and the thesis that individuals do not have the power of free choice, they have actually helped the cause of socialism. Their acceptance of the idea that material and technological advances are somehow "automatic" and "inevitable" has led them to endorse, and thus to popularize, policies of govern-

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ment interference with individual initiative, efforts, and savings which make such advances possible.

The closing note of Mises' book, however, is hopeful. "The keystone of Western civilization is the sphere of spontaneous action it secures to the individual." Although the trend of recent years has been toward trying to "stabilize" economies and inhibit individual initiative through government intervention, so far, Mises concludes, the advocates of these policies in the West have not succeeded in wiping out "the individual's disposition to think and to apply to all problems the yardstick of reasoning."

This book is a deep, philosophical analysis. It is not intended for beginners. It contains much which should be of vital interest, however, to serious students of history and philosophy. If it is read and understood by the world's "thought leaders," it could have a profound influence for the cause of freedom. BETTINA BIEN

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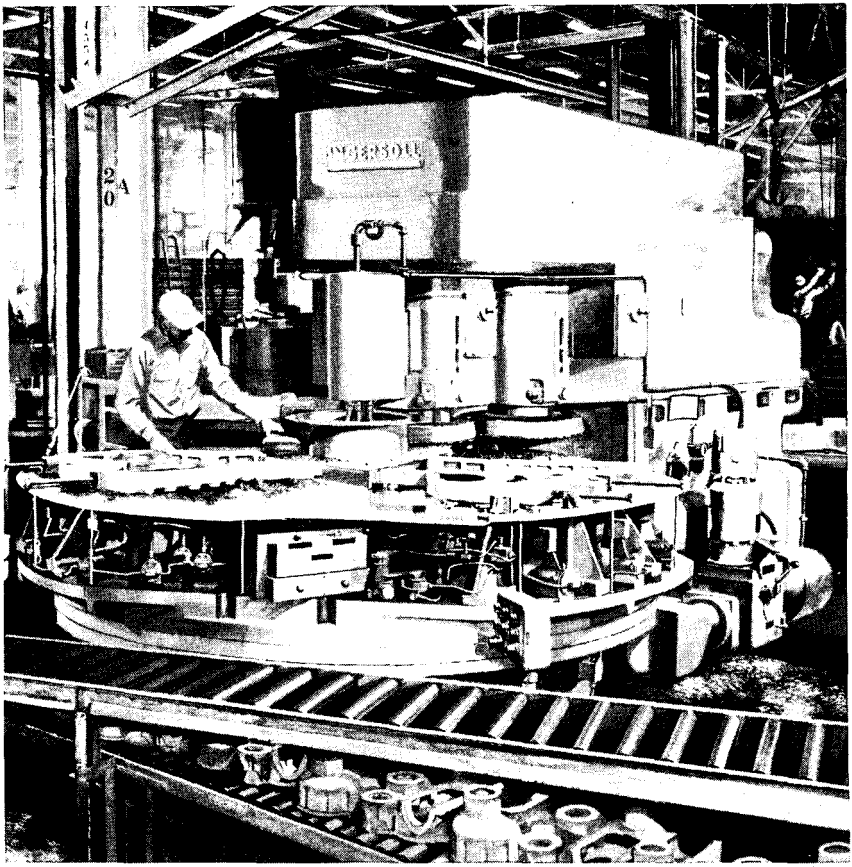

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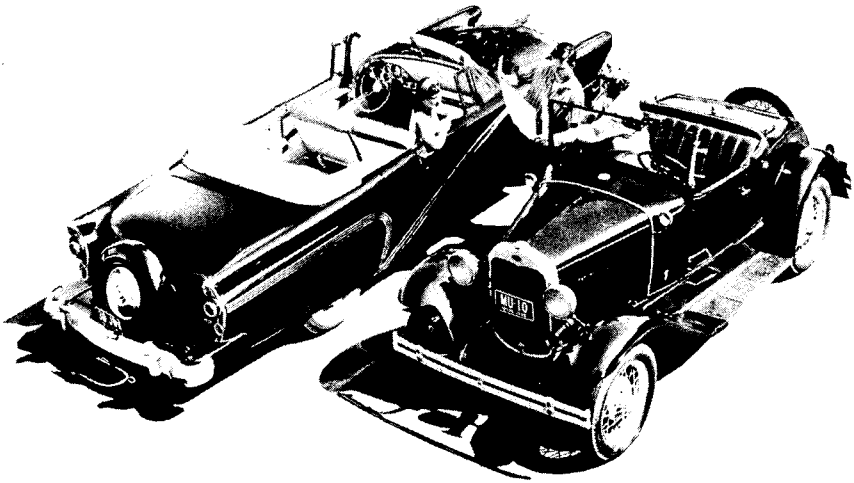

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